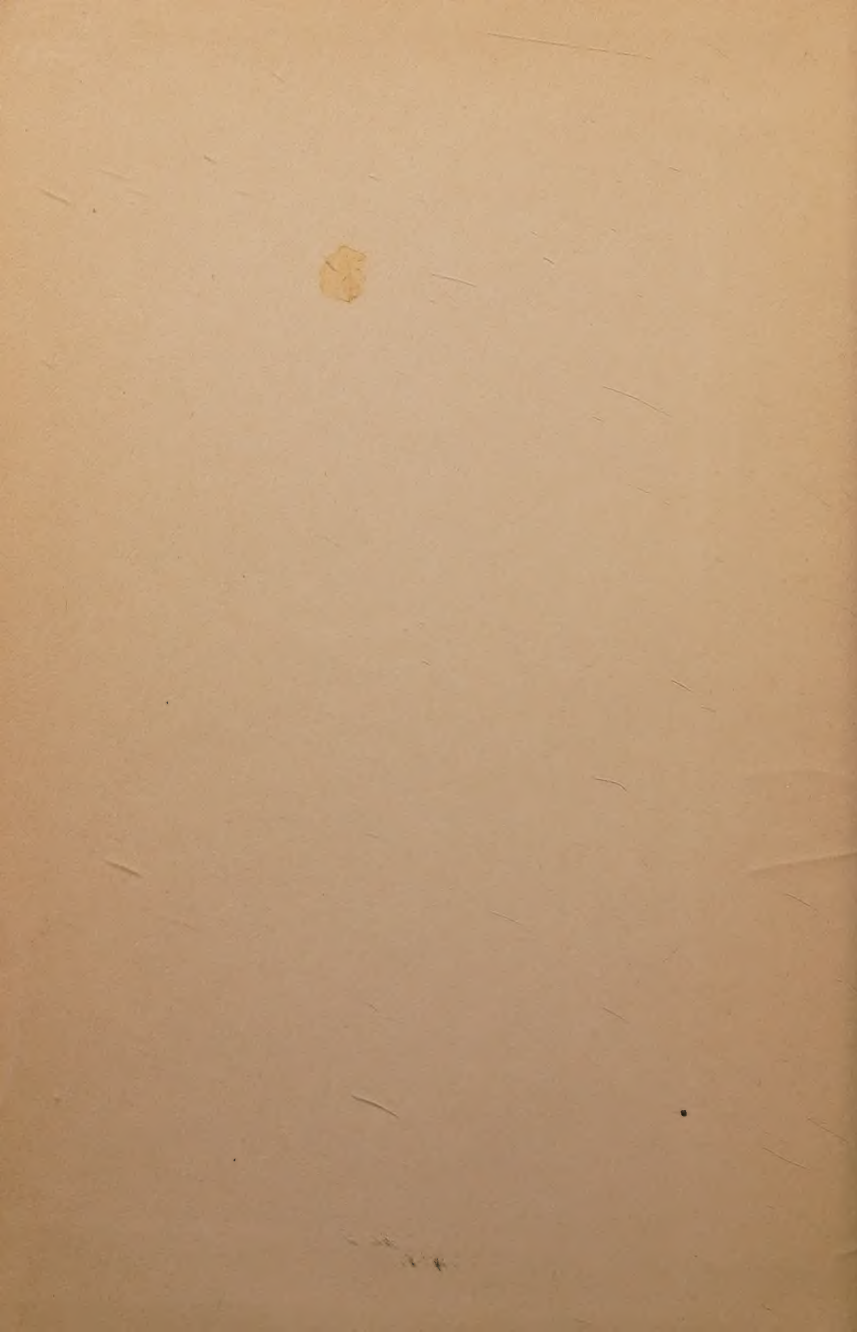


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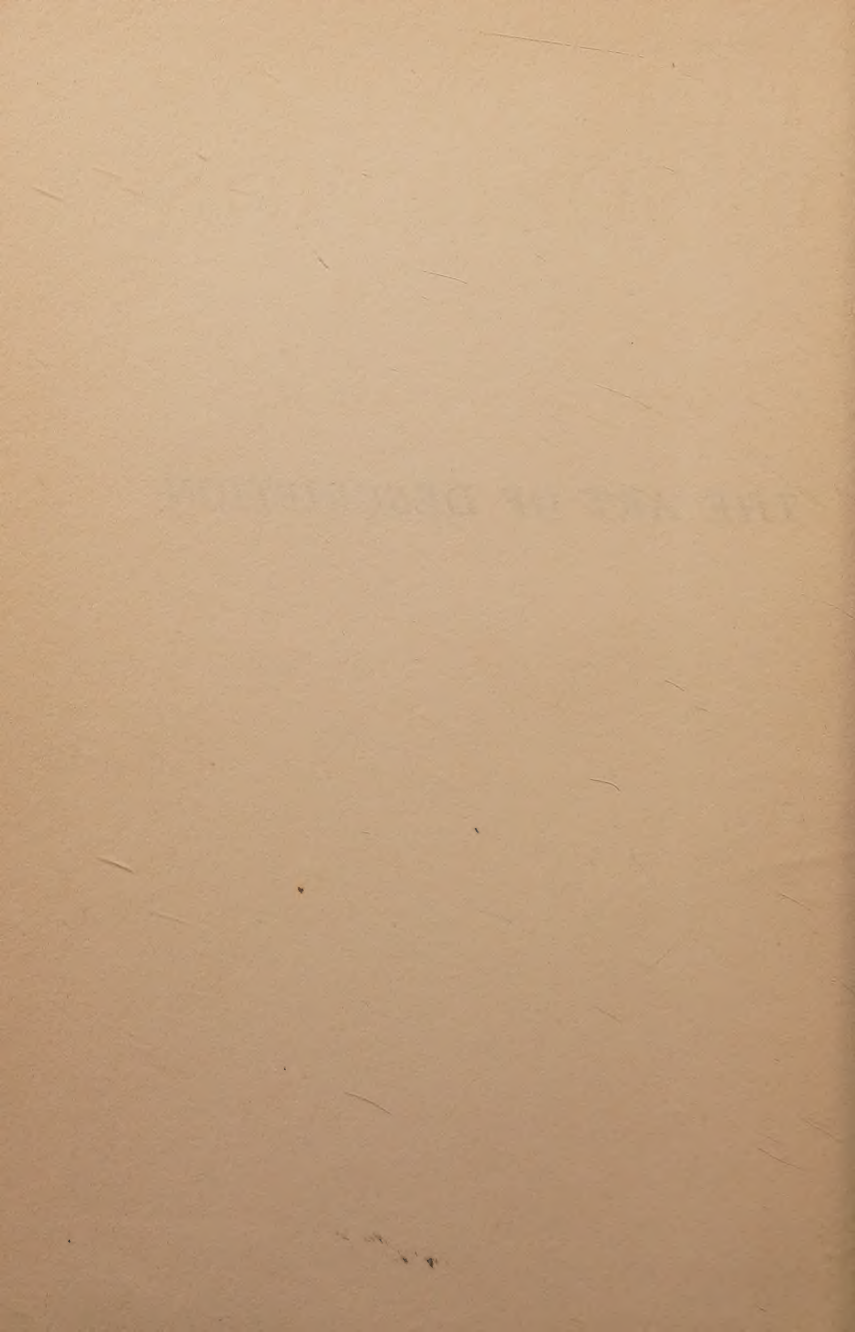
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THE ART OF DESCRIPTION



THE ART OF DESCRIPTION

By

MARJORIE H. NICOLSON

SMITH COLLEGE



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PREFACE

"The art of writing," said George Henry Lewes, "is not, as many seem to imagine, the art of bringing fine phrases into rhythmical order, but the art of placing before the reader intelligible symbols of the thoughts and feelings in the writer's mind." Description is not that artificial thing—a "form of discourse"; it is one of several moods or attitudes of mind through which a writer or speaker, who has found his world interesting, beautiful, ugly, or effective, endeavors to transfer to others his pleasure or his interest in that world. There are not, and there can not be, set and unvarying "rules" for descriptive writing—or, indeed, for any kind of writing. He who sees clearly, who feels the significance of what he sees, and who expresses himself distinctly, will, of necessity, write good description. There is no more valuable practice than such writing. Nothing else will so surely lead to accuracy of observation and to exactness of expression. Materials for description surround us constantly, and the roots of description lie deep in the universal desire of man to communicate his reactions to others.

There has been no attempt in this book to lay down rules or to give orders. What is said here is suggestive merely. I do not expect that other students of description will agree with all I suggest; on the contrary, I hope these ideas may serve merely as points of departure for both teachers and students. The selections which have been included, numerous though I have tried to make

them, will be supplemented in the classroom by dozens of others, drawn from the literature of the past and the present. The selections here given illustrate merely some of the many ways in which writers have gone about the problems of description. Many other illustrations have been omitted, with regret; those have been retained which seem to the author most worthy of detailed study in the classroom. The order in which the various sorts of description have been treated is an order which has been found by the author to be logically and psychologically satisfactory in the development of a college course in descriptive writing. One reservation must be made: the chapter on descriptive diction has been placed at the beginning of the course; but the teacher will find that descriptive diction is not to be disposed of once for all; and, indeed, will be taken up in connection with every assignment in writing.

I owe many debts of gratitude, in connection with the compilation of this book, which I may mention, though not thereby discharge. The many American and English publishers to whom I have applied for the use of copyright material have courteously granted my requests; acknowledgment is made to them in the text. I wish also to thank these authors for their kindness in giving personal permission for the use of material: Mr. Thomas Beer, Mr. A. T. A. Dobson, Mr. Walter de la Mare, Mr. Hamlin Garland, Mr. William McFee, Mr. H. L. Mencken, Mr. Christopher Morley, Mr. Fred Rothwell, Mr. Upton Sinclair, and Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith.

To my former colleagues in the department of English at the University of Minnesota, I am grateful for many suggestions. Particularly, I wish to acknowledge here the many kindnesses of Professor Joseph M. Thomas, who has always found time in his very busy life to advise

and aid his colleagues and students. Professor Thomas has been good enough to read the manuscript of this book, and to make many suggestions of which I have been glad to take advantage. Finally, it is impossible for me even to suggest my indebtedness to my friend and former colleague, Miss Mary Ellen Chase, of the University of Minnesota. Miss Chase's enthusiasm in making her ideas and suggestions for teaching the property of all who know her, has caused me, both consciously and unconsciously, to adopt many of her methods as my own. Her own generosity—bounteous as the sea—must bear the responsibility for my plagiarism!

M. H. N.

FOREWORD

A generation ago, the tradition was widely prevalent among teachers of composition that ability to write acceptable description depended more on inherent aptitude than on skill developed by any process of discipline, that it was rather a profitless task to teach description except to those especially gifted. This belief was fostered by what is now recognized as a fallacy of psychology, the doctrine of special faculties. It was assumed that the brain resembled a house, that there were certain parts devoted to specific functions. As some houses had rooms for special purposes not to be found in other houses, so the brain of a certain individual might have a special area indicative of ability not to be found in that of another. By this process of reasoning, some houses have sun porches, others have not; some persons have sun-rooms of the mind—to pursue the analogy—others have not. It was only for those fortunate persons to whom the Great Architect had given the luxury of a highly perceptive faculty that training in description held out hope of profit.

But this limitation of the teaching of description was due not merely to an erroneously assumed inability on the part of the taught, but to a very actual inability on the part of the teachers. They naturally found it difficult to teach that which they themselves had never adequately studied and for the teaching of which there was no method and no apparatus other than that which they provided for themselves in rather a makeshift fashion.

Of late, there have been numerous volumes of selections

containing specimens of description to be analyzed and studied as to methods and principles as well as to be used as models of imitation. Professor Baldwin was the first to edit a volume devoted entirely to description. All teachers of composition should be grateful to him for the introductory essay in which he points out the benefits to be derived by the student from training in the art of description. Yet other volumes of the sort have been remarkably few in number. Publishers of text-books rarely attempt to create a market; their business is to supply existing needs. The lack of special studies of descriptive technique and of collections of description such as exist for argument, the short-story, and the expository essay may be attributed almost entirely to the failure of teachers to appreciate the unique benefits to be derived from an intensive course in descriptive writing.

It is because I personally believe in the general educational value of such a course that I welcome the appearance of this volume. It is in itself evidence of an increasing interest in the subject, and it should, by the excellence—and variety—of the selections included and of the critical suggestions and analyses provided, stimulate a wider study of a much neglected yet fascinating field.

Many times each year I am asked by students and others who take pleasure in some form of creative writing how they are to justify themselves to critical relatives and scoffing friends for expending their time and energy on some work which they can never hope to have published, for which they expect no monetary reward. The fact that the only satisfaction the writers expect is the pleasure they derive from their own activity makes their efforts seem only the more ridiculous to their friends. Apparently we have not yet outgrown the ignorant belief that writers are necessarily "queer." We

may however entertain hope. Professional musicians may still occasionally be eccentric; but every child to-day is supposed to have some training in music, to be taught to sing or to play some instrument, the piano, the violin, or the saxophone. And their families and all the neighbors suffer during their apprenticeship, but suffer on the whole uncomplainingly, being firmly convinced that it is wise to develop children's artistic sensibilities. Writing and painting have in common at least this one virtue, that their novices, however painful their process of learning may be to themselves, need not inflict torture on innocent bystanders. Classes in sketching and painting have been established in numerous cities for professional and business men. Their popularity proves that even men whom we are accustomed to call "hard-headed" recognize that the value of art to the creator is not contingent on its reward, either monetary or other, by the public. The time may yet come when those who give expression to their creative impulse through writing may be considered at least as rational as the devotees of the movies.

Training in description as a means of artistic expression has been neglected, its value grossly underestimated. Too much energy in our schools and colleges is spent in teaching students to write stories, particularly that high and most difficult form of fiction, the short-story. I can only repeat here what I have written elsewhere: "No one can hope to succeed in narration who cannot describe. The very qualities that are demanded in description are essential in narration." The facility of young students in the mechanics of narration—the invention of situation, the manipulation of incident, the creation of ingenious climaxes, the handling of dialogue in the truly dramatic manner—is often amazing. They

can construct an excellent skeleton, but they cannot clothe it in flesh and blood and inspire that body with the breath of life. What they lack are: first, that acuteness of perception which comes only from definite discipline of the powers of observation; and second, a sense of style—in the narrower meaning of the term—an appreciation of the value of words, their literal meaning plus their power of suggestion to readers. These a novice in the art of narration might acquire more easily and more surely by a short, rigorous training in descriptive writing.

It would be useless to ignore the fact that description seldom exists in and for itself. It is nearly always subsidiary to other forms of writing: it plays only a minor role; it is the tire woman to the lady narration. But the study of it, the practice of it for its own sake, however artificial it may seem, brings rewards peculiarly its own. The most obvious is that quickening of the powers of perception that comes from a careful training in observation. How much a person's ability to educate himself depends on a proper discipline of his eye and his ear has only lately been recognized in our public schools. Keener perceptive faculties result not only in giving the student an immense amount of information about the world in which he lives, but also in enabling him to find unsuspected pleasures in the simplest, most ordinary scenes of daily life. There are none so pathetic as those who having eyes see not and having ears hear not.

But description deals not merely with scenery, with "nature study." In its more subtle and more interesting phases it is concerned with men and women. It presents something more than portraits or even moving pictures of the persons it portrays. It pictures the inner life,—the physical sensations, the emotions, the thoughts which are the essence of character. It is in this attempt

to understand and to portray his fellow human beings that the student may happily attain a larger understanding of his fellows and a deeper sympathy with them. The writing of description may thus take on a larger educational aspect: it may be of ethical significance.

J. M. THOMAS.

Minneapolis, Minn.

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CHAPTER I

The Art of Description

I

Thomas Huxley, in his paper *On Science and Art in Relation to Education*, declared that, if he were reconstructing the system of elementary education in England, the first thing he would do would be to require that all children be taught, as early as possible, to draw. He had no expectation that children so taught would produce universal masterpieces of art; it was not the artist's but the scientist's eye in which he was primarily interested. Of this early training he says:

I do not think its value can be exaggerated, because it gives you the means of training the young in attention and accuracy, in which all mankind are more deficient than in any other mental quality whatever.

Accurate perception is, as Huxley realized, the first step in the education of anyone who wishes to describe, either as the scientist describes the cell under the microscope, as the architect describes his projected building by means of a plan, as the painter describes his subject by means of oils or colors, or as the artist in words—prose or poetry—describes the world in which he finds himself. It seems a small thing to insist upon—this ability to see clearly. Yet anyone who studies even the most elementary course in science learns the difference between the apparent simplicity of an object and its real complexity.

A blade of grass, a common wild flower—any child knows these. Examine them in the laboratory under the microscope, and what do they become? In childhood we see the “man in the moon” or the “lovers in the moon”; but no one who has once looked at the moon through a powerful telescope can ever think of it again merely as a flat yellow disk on which is imprinted a picture. “You must know,” said Leonardo da Vinci, the great Renaissance artist, “that it is only eyes gained by knowledge that can see.”

Wordsworth is said to have written always with “the eye on the object.” One of the important meanings of this much-discussed phrase is undoubtedly that Wordsworth strove to describe things as *he* saw them, not as other poets had said they should be described. Description, to have any value at all, must express individual reaction. A man who is color-blind has neither moral nor artistic right to describe his world in terms of the colors which his normal-sighted neighbor sees in it. The description of a field of flowers, written by a color-blind man, would undoubtedly be less beautiful than the picture by his neighbor, but it would not necessarily be less interesting. Those who are blind may not interpret the world through the sense of sight—except it be the memory or the imagination of sight; they may, however, interpret it more vividly than the rest of us in terms of the other senses. The value of such a description will lie in its accuracy of perception through a sense which is vivid and clear.

a prerequisite

Accuracy of perception, then, is the first requisite of good description; but the word perception has both a physical and a mental significance. Whether the eyes of any two people see a given object in exactly the same way is a question for science; certainly we vary so in

our response to sense stimuli that there is often wide individual divergence. The differences in mental response are even more striking, for such reactions are always the result of experience. [Those people will describe most vividly who have felt most keenly, whose minds are store-houses of memory and experience.] But feeling keenly does not necessarily imply wide knowledge of races and lands or unusual experiences. One may live through books, pictures, music, science, if such living is not mere dabbling, on the one hand, or narrow specialization, on the other. "I was never out of England," writes Browning's musician, but, as he plays a toccata of Galuppi's,— "it's as if I saw it all." Keats is an excellent example of a poet whose actual life was so circumscribed and lacking in events as to make his biography almost entirely a record of his inner experiences, yet his understanding knew no bounds compatible with the narrowness of his life; and where is the critic who has yet explained the genius of Shakespeare?

[There are many reasons why accuracy of perception is not as easy to achieve as it seems to be.] Lack of training in youth has already been suggested. Carelessness about details is another common cause; we are too much inclined to be content with what we like to call "broad, general ideas," paying little attention to the parts which *cause of failure* make the whole. Lack of intellectual curiosity—a general dulling of that eager interest of childhood in things because they are things, which turns each day into an adventure—this, again, is a fundamental reason. Most serious of all the foes of accurate perception to most individuals are human emotion and sentiment—strong in so far as they are justified by the event, but degenerating into weak sentimentality when they are not. Ruskin, in a famous passage in his *Modern Painters*, discusses the

falsification of perception by emotion under the general heading of the "Pathetic Fallacy." In connection with this particular point, he says: ¹

The temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, . . . that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or overclouded, or over-dazzled, by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of the emotion which has induced it. For it is no credit to a man that he is not morbid or inaccurate in his perceptions, when he has no strength of feeling to warp them; and it is in general a sign of higher capacity and stand in the ranks of being, that the emotions should be strong enough to vanquish, partly, the intellect, and make it believe what they choose. But it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises, till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.

Last of these enemies of accurate perception are the preconceived notions and prejudices with which we approach new scenes or new ideas, and which keep us from seeing things as they are, since we insist upon interpreting them in terms of what we expect them to be. Most dangerous of these preconceived notions—particularly for the amateur—are conventions of point of view and of language. We grow so accustomed to meeting, in our novels and moving-picture-plays, conventional situations and stock characters, that we come to interpret situations in life, and men and women we meet, in terms of these conventions. We think we must describe what has always been described, as if the world was not so full of interest that no man's life is long enough even to begin upon it! This convention of point of view is a most dangerous one, for we have become so accustomed to it

¹ *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Chap. xii, Sect. 8.

that we frequently do not recognize its existence. For generations, American literature was little more than a pale reflection of English literature; transplanted, it lost much of its vitality, and it never became entirely native to our country. Only in comparatively recent times has America recognized a literary force in herself that is like nothing in Europe—a natural expression of her own peculiar nature. When William Cullen Bryant wrote of autumn: "The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year," he was writing a conventional English lament for the passing of beauty. The Englishman who spends his first autumn in America, particularly in that part of it which Bryant knew best, is struck not by the sadness but by the glory of our fall, the flaming scarlet of the trees, the brilliance of the sky, the riot of color, seen at no other time. Except during its last days, autumn is not in America a melancholy season at all; yet it has become conventional to call it so, even to read melancholy into it.

All this leads to the second characteristic of the artist who wishes to describe in words—not, after all, a second characteristic, but a natural accompaniment of the first: sincerity. True power in writing comes through the sincerity of the writer, though the casuistical reasoning or dazzling oratory of a Belial whose "tongue dropped manna" and who "could make the worse appear the better reason" may at first carry an audience. Here the student will do well to read what George Henry Lewes has to say in the sections on "The Value of Sincerity" in *The Principles of Success in Literature*. In discussing the particular point we have been raising, he remarks:

No man was ever eloquent by trying to be eloquent, but only by being so. Trying leads to the vice of "fine writing"—the plague-spot of Literature—not only unhealthy in itself, and vulgarizing

the grand language which should be reserved for great thoughts, but encouraging that tendency to select only those views upon which a spurious enthusiasm can most readily graft the representative abstractions and stirring suggestions which will move public applause. The "fine writer" will always prefer the opinion which is striking to the opinion which is true.

The author of an anonymous essay, published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, called "The Daily Theme Eye"²—tells of his college room-mate, who, in their course in composition, hard up for a subject, wrote a description of a cliff which he had seen in Newfoundland, and, desiring to make it as pictorial as possible, added "tumbling waterfalls" and "sighing pines." When the instructor—who had also been to Newfoundland!—suggested that there were no "tumbling waterfalls" or "sighing pines" in that vicinity, the student could not see that he had really been guilty of a fault.

Sincerity in writing is as vital a thing as sincerity in business or social relations, or in friendship. To be sincere is to express oneself, not to imitate or follow others. This does not mean, however, that one may never imitate and follow while he is in the experimental stage, provided always that he recognizes the fact that he is imitating, and does not accept as his own, without investigation and sincere belief, the ideas of others. Inevitably he will adopt as his own some of their ideas—which, after all, are common to all men, for no one but a madman is so original that he holds no universal opinions. True originality, as Lewes points out, "is independence, not rebellion; it is sincerity, not antagonism." If you are true, then, to the picture which *your* eyes see, which *your* mind

² This essay, which might well be read by all students of description, may be found in *Essays and Essay Writing*, edited by William M. Tanner, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1917, pp. 21-5.

understands, no matter how simple the subject, you will write description which will merit attention.

But great description implies yet another characteristic. Many sculptors carved male figures, yet there is only one Apollo Belvedere; many artists painted the Virgin and Child, yet there is only one Sistine Madonna; other men have descended into hell, yet only Dante rose from that descent to create a *Divina Commedia*. The third characteristic is interpretation. Take, for example, the character of Satan—one of the most universal of conceptions. In how many guises has he been conceived: Lucifer, Son of the Morning, the star that falls; a serpent creeping upon the ground; the Adversary in the *Book of Job*; the mediæval figure with horns and a tail, sometimes grotesque, sometimes a popular humorous character; Old Nick; the Mephistopheles of the old Faust book, and of Marlowe; the Mephistopheles of Goethe; the grotesque and terrible figure of Dante's lowest hell, who, with the wings of his negation, freezes eternally the ice in which he is embedded; the magnificent figure of the early books of *Paradise Lost*, "majestic though in ruin." It is the same character; the difference lies in interpretation. Such interpretations imply the imagination which transforms the world, like the philosopher's stone, turning drabness to gold.

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II

From the descriptions in its literature, one may deduce the temper of a race. No people in history have been more direct, more lucid, less sentimental than the Greeks. They had no lack of emotion, but it was natural emotion, hampered by few inhibitions, held in check by their own clear-sighted conviction that the perfect human being was

the one in whom mind and body ruled equally. We will look in vain among Greek authors—at least until the decadence—for any such sentimental treatments of men and women as have flourished widely in European literature since the Romantic movement; in vain for any conception of “Art for Art’s Sake.” The modern reader, trained usually in the literature of the last three hundred years, may feel something lacking when he turns for the first time to Homer, Sappho, Sophocles; there is a lucidity which he admires, no doubt, but in his heart he wants more. Yet a knowledge of Greek prose and poetry is the best corrective for many of the faults of our contemporary literature. The student who wishes to see simple, direct description at its best and clearest will do well to “make Homer’s works his study and delight.”

For a moment we may pause to suggest some of the outstanding characteristics of Greek writing and thinking which have particular relation to the problems of description. It can be for but a moment, and the suggestions will seem to the lover of Greek superficial in the extreme. In the first place, description in Greek literature never exists for its own sake; there is no analogy there to the whimsical delight which, as we shall see, some of our writers take in elaborating and embroidering a theme, the mere pleasure in heaping up details. At first glance, it may seem that that statement is contradicted by such famous examples as Homer’s description of the shield of Achilles, or Theocritus’ account, in his first *Idyll*, of the bowl which is to be the prize of the winner; but examination of the passages will show that the intention of the writer in each of these cases is to add to the importance of the object—to prove how much finer the shield of Achilles was than the shield of other warriors, to suggest that the carven bowl was well worth the contest. In

Greek literature as a whole, description consists less in elaborating than in *reporting* the object as it was, or as the author believed it to be. It is therefore brief and direct. Modern description abounds in implications; it stirs vague desires, aspirations, fears of which the Greeks were barely aware. Simple as it may be, it is the voice of generations of men and women who have felt powers beyond themselves, who have measured the finite against the infinite, and have learned sometimes pride, sometimes humility. Greek descriptions are characterized by exactness. The Greek, of all men, wrote with his eye on the object. Wordsworth's primrose would have brought him no "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"; it would have been a primrose, accepted by him for what it was, neither more nor less. Even Greek descriptions of the supernatural are simple and direct, for the Greek felt the supernatural merely as another part of his world. Thus his gods were only stronger and more beautiful men and women; the typical Greek used no such words of them as "incomprehensible" and "infinite." The *typical* Greek, it must be understood, for Plato and his followers who did use such words were in many ways not typical Greeks. Zeus was "the mighty one"; but there were many occasions on which Zeus was caught in his own snares, and he was far from being omnipotent. Homer speaks of the Sirens with complete belief; they were not human, but it did not occur to him for that reason to doubt their existence. He took it for granted that they were beautiful women who sang as they enticed men to their shores—an easy theme to enlarge upon, to render allegorical, yet see Homer: "For the Sirens," said he, "cast a spell of penetrating song, sitting within a meadow. Near by is a great heap of rotting human bones; fragments of skin are shrivelling on them."

There is the thing as Homer thought it was. It would have surprised no early Greek had he met Pan or Apollo or Diana in the forest; he would not for a moment have been so overcome that he would not have been able, clearly and definitely, to tell his wife and children all about them upon his return. Greek description was noticeably truthful; it was an exact statement of the original as the Greek saw it; it was artistically and morally true to his conception of the world. Our poets have read meaning and significance into nature which a Greek poet would not have comprehended. There is nothing in Greek poetry to correspond with Shelley's West Wind or his Skylark, with Mrs. Browning's seagull or her conception of the gods who mourn because Pan fashions the reed into a musical pipe, nothing like Holmes' "spend-thrift crocus." When Homer wished to describe a bird, as a comparison with a god or man, he did it this way:

Out of the upper air he dropped down on the deep, and skimmed along the water like a bird, a gull, which down the fearful hollows of the barren sea, snatching at fish, dips its thick plumage in the spray. In this wise, through the multitude of waves, moved Hermes.

All this is observation as exact and truthful as the report of a scientist. Only in one place in that passage does Homer seem to introduce any such emotional interpretation of nature as Ruskin would call "pathetic fallacy"; *that is in his expression, "the fearful hollows of the barren sea"; yet if one studies the various adjectives which Homer uses to describe the sea, he becomes aware of the exactness of just such words as these. The sea was to the Greeks a daily companion, often their cradle, not infrequently their grave. They saw it in all its moods, and they neither exaggerated its beauty nor underestimated its dangers. In some moods it was "fearful" and "bar-

* *Fancy runs riot - willful fancy*

ren"; in others it was "Poseidon, the earth-shaker"; often it was merely the "wine-dark sea." What a different impression is given by its treatment, equally simple and compelling, in our contemporary drama, *Riders to the Sea*, by John Millington Synge!

Greek description was always simple; and the power of such simplicity lies, without doubt, in its concreteness, its economy, its concentration, its significance. When Circe tells Odysseus of the dangers he must encounter, she does so with no sentimentality, but with grave simplicity. Much though she wishes to detain or dissuade him, she does not exaggerate details merely to pile horror on horror; she states them as they are. This, for instance, is the place where Scylla dwells:

By the other way there are two crags, one reaching up to the broad heavens with its sharp peak. Clouds gather about it darkly and never float away; light strikes its peak neither in heat nor harvest. No mortal man could clamber up or down it, though twenty hands and feet were his; for the rock is smooth as it were polished.

Simple, yet immensely significant; high, sharp, steep, dark, inaccessible—what more need be said? Or take the words in which Odysseus describes to his companions what he has seen upon his reconnoitering expedition:

I saw, on climbing to a rugged outlook, an island which the boundless deep encircles like a crown. Low in the sea it lies; midway across, I saw a smoke through some oak thickets and a wood.

There we have it, exact, simple, with as much or as little significance as the future may give it. In spite of the desperate strait in which they found themselves, Odysseus and his men neither hoped nor feared too much from that island.

notation
The epithet, most customary of all Greek descriptive devices, is based entirely upon this idea of the choice of the significant. The Greek writers never describe a character in detail; theirs is the art of omission. They choose the one aspect, physical, mental, or moral, which seems to them most typical or characteristic, and they leave the filling-in for our imaginations. Who cannot visualize for himself "white-armed Nausicaa"? Must we know her age, her height, the color of her hair and eyes? When Homer speaks of "gold-throned Morning" or the "golden-sandalled Dawn"; when he tells of "fair-ankled Ino," "clear-eyed Athena"; or draws the "red-cheeked ships," "white-sailed" or propelled by "shapely oars" upon the "wine-dark sea," our own imaginations will construct the rest of the picture. Only the beautiful—at least in the just world of the imagination—may wear golden sandals, as only Cinderella could wear the glass slipper. Indeed, the great advantage of Greek over modern literature is that the former evokes our imaginations and our memories and causes us to build up for ourselves a world of beauty, while the tendency of modern literature is to express so much that there is nothing left for the imagination to create.

There are many reasons why the Greeks should have excelled in this simplicity and clarity. Their civilization, great as it was, was simpler, less conventionalized, less sophisticated than our own; they were not, as we, the "heirs of all the ages," bound by the centuries of tradition of thought and emotion, which have so colored our world. It used to be customary to speak of the Greeks as having lived in the "childhood of the world," and though our modern knowledge of history and of science has taught us the fallacy of that expression, we still feel a directness, a power of going to the point and reporting without

double meanings, which the Greeks shared with children of any generation. R. W. Livingstone has expressed the matter well in *The Greek Genius*:³

They were too young for many of the tastes of our own age. They themselves said that they disliked . . . the infinite, "that of which the end cannot be seen"; the mysterious as a whole was disagreeable to them, and they were infinitely far from the deliberate exploitation of it by which Maeterlinck, Verlaine, and the modern symbolists live. They had no part in those familiar phenomena of modern poetry, its rebellion against the actual, its cry for the impossible, its reaching away from the finite, its obstinate questioning of sense and outward things, its aspiration towards unrealized worlds. . . . Nor did they wanton in mere beauty, using language and painting situations because, though unreal, they are picturesque or pleasant. . . . Nor did they wallow in luxurious emotions of sentimentality, trying at all costs to be magnificent or heroic or pathetic or picturesque, sacrificing truth to effect, leaving reality to follow a phantom, which in the end disappoints them of their quest. . . . They were finite and actual; they lived in a realized world. They looked at things naked and found that the seagull was an ordinary bird, and love a very definite emotion. They did not search in them for more than meets the eye, but were content with their beauty as it is. There is quite enough beauty, they thought, in the real thing, if you will only open your eyes and see it.

All these characteristics of Greek description—directness, exactness, truthfulness, concreteness, concentration, significance—may be found in that powerful scene in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* in which Homer relates, simply and directly, the story of Odysseus' visit to the land of Hades. In such a scene, if anywhere, we might expect Homer and Odysseus both to be startled out of their calm, and we might forgive them if they proved false to that moderation which is the fundamental quality of all Greek literature. But see what happens. These are not supermen, above the fears and passions of other

³ R. W. Livingstone, *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us*. Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 90 ff.

men. Far from it; nor do they hesitate to show their grief. "We ourselves," says Odysseus, "embarked in sadness, letting the big tears fall." This sadness, however, did not interfere with necessary activity; they went about their customary work. "Then the sun sank and all the ways grew dark." The dread land to which they came, Odysseus calls merely "earth's limits, the deep stream of the Ocean, where the Cimmerian people's land and city lie, wrapt in a fog and cloud." There, directly enough, they go about the allotted tasks, performing the sacrifices necessary to call together the spirits of the dead. A pit is dug, an offering is poured to the dead, the throats of sheep are cut over the pit, "and forth the dark blood ran." "Then," continues Odysseus, "gathered there spirits from out of Erebus, of those now dead and gone—brides and unwedded youths, and worn old men, delicate maids with hearts but new to sorrow, and many pierced with brazen spears—men slain in fight wearing their blood-stained armor. In crowds about the pit they flocked from every side, with awful wail." Does the "great-hearted Odysseus" watch this sight unmoved? Not at all. "Pale terror seized me," he says, simply and truthfully. Yet not for a moment does he forget the direction, the violation of which will cause the failure of the whole expedition. Drawing his sharp sword from his thigh, he holds it above the pit of blood and will not let the "strengthless dead" approach until he has made question of the prophet Tiresias. Not for a moment does he waver in his steadfastness—not for pity, when he sees his new-dead friend Elpenor, one of the companions of his voyage; not for love in that tragic moment when there appears before him "the spirit of my dead mother . . . whom I had left alive on setting forth for sacred Ilios. I wept to see her, and pitied her from my heart; but even so I did not

let her—deeply though it grieved me—approach the blood till I had made inquiry of Tiresias.”

So much for the Greek spirit, still a wonder of the world. These qualities of simplicity, directness, concreteness, vividness, were not possessed by the Greeks alone. We find them in all early literature, in the epics, the sagas, the tales of those whose environments made them concern themselves with things as they were rather than with things as they felt they ought to be. These qualities permeate *Beowulf*, mingled with a rugged intensity which at times exceeds even that of the Greek; they are implied in the favorite figure of speech of the poet of *Beowulf*—“litotes,” which consists in understatement. We find directness in *Chaucer*, product though he was of a much more sophisticated age; and, in his greatest moments, *Shakespeare*, who so often delighted in o euphuism and embroidery, becomes simple and direct with tremendous suggestiveness:

Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir.

Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,

Look there, look there!

It is these same qualities which give universal appeal to many books of the Bible, both in the originals and in the greatest English translation. We will not find these qualities predominating in those books which are primarily philosophical, mystical, prophetic, any more than we will find them in the dialogues of Plato; but we will see them in the pictures which come back most often to us: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul.” “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall

x an understatement
o flowery language

not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The figures of speech in the Bible are those which most frequently occur to people whose lives are truly simple; these writers are never consciously striving for effect. To a people constantly threatened by marauding enemies, the Lord is "a fortress and a deliverer"; he is "my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower"; he is "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." To those who had most reason to fear the dark, God was "a light in the wilderness," "a fountain of light," "my light and my salvation." The "glory of God had thundered" many times, and more than once had the psalmist felt that "the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, yea, even the cedars of Lebanon." To an agricultural people, evil doers might well seem to be "cut down like the grass and wither like the green herb." To those whose lives were spent in tending their flocks, Christ was the good shepherd who gave his life for his sheep; to those who dwelt in peril of the sea, he was rather the pilot, the light across the waves, the rock of ages. The parables of Christ, tremendous in their implication, are simplicity itself in their expression. He speaks of good and bad servants, masters and men, husbandmen in the vineyards, wise and foolish virgins, widows and judges, lost sheep, pieces of silver, prodigal sons and "the husks that the swine did eat." Just as the power of the simplicity, the truth, and the directness of the Greeks may be seen at its height in the description of the visit of Odysseus to Hades, so the same characteristics exhibit themselves at their greatest in the account of the birth of Jesus, as related in the *Book of Luke*—a passage so familiar in every line and cadence that to quote it would be a work of supererogation.

These are the qualities which all early literatures share

in common; what part they play in our modern literature we shall see. Never entirely lost, they are reinterpreted and transmuted, so that, like the fallen angels, they show their "glory obscured." It is, however, not too much to say that the greatest writers in our language have been those whose minds were stored from childhood either with the cadences and images of the Greeks or with those of the Bible; and whoever would see clearly, think strongly, and express himself truly, may best begin with the study of these men, Greeks, Hebrews, Christians, who so perfectly did so.

III

Now that we have seen the fundamental characteristics of the descriptive artist, and some of his most valuable qualities, we may justly inquire about his material. Where is it to be found? Stevenson has answered that question in a sentence. "Description," he wrote in a discussion of his early training, "was the principal field of my exercise; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject." If the writer has trained himself in accurate perception, if he is blessed with a "daily theme eye," he will need no suggestion. Walk down a city street; there is no face that is not interesting; the newsboy, the woman hurrying home, the man who leans listlessly over a railroad bridge watching the trains shunt back and forth, the sudden glimpse of a face in which terror still lurks, the quick gleam of crafty eyes; the paradoxes which any city affords: a neglected graveyard upon which the city has encroached, the stately house which stands, the last of its generation, in a row of automobile sales-shops, a flower market on a dull day,

a speeding ambulance with clanging bell, the sudden transformation of the first snow storm. All you require is an observant eye, and a mind interested in the suggestiveness of common things. For description, of all forms of writing, delights in the ordinary, the usual; its charm is the discovery of significance; its value, the broadening of sympathy and understanding. In general, the subjects for descriptive writing—as, indeed, for all writing—should come from the individual experience of the author. Most of us will add little to humanity's appreciation of great cathedrals, the masterpieces of art, or the seven wonders of the world, through our description of them. That is not to say that there is not always interest, often real value, in the frank and sincere appraisal of an accepted masterpiece through fresh eyes, unhampered by conventional praise. Yet in general the best themes for most of us are those which have grown out of our personal experience. Read autobiography and reminiscence, and see how interesting is the world of childhood, interpreted by those who remember vividly. Early memories of people and places come thronging back and beg for expression; retrospection may lend a value which the original never had. No two people, not even brothers and sisters, have lived in exactly the same world. No one can assume the experience of another. Does that mean, then, that one should never attempt to write about anything which he has never actually seen or experienced? That would be to exclude imagination. The world as we imagine it is certainly as legitimate a part of art as the world as we have seen it, provided always we remember that here, too, the cardinal principle of *sincerity* holds true.

True description has, and can have—and this is its charm in our efficient and pragmatic age—no utilitarian

value. "Skylarks," said Alexander Smith in one of the essays in *Dreamthorp*, "are primarily created to sing, although a whole choir of them may be baked in pies and brought to table; they were born to make music, although they may incidentally stay the pangs of vulgar hunger." Description exists because of the interest and delight of human beings in the world of sense in which they live, and because of their desire to communicate that interest and delight to others. Its materials are the materials out of which the world is made: men, women and children; trees, flowers, birds; hurricanes, destruction, and death; all the beauty—and all the ugliness of the universe. Nothing human—we may vary the quotation slightly—is alien to it. The descriptive mind, in its whimsical moods, is that of Jacques, who found much to ponder on in deer, and the passage of time, and fools whom he met in the forest. Like Alexander Smith's essay-writer, it has no lack of subject matter: ⁴

He has the day that is passing over his head; and, if unsatisfied with that, he has the world's six thousand years to depasture his gay or serious humor upon. I idle away my time here, and I am finding new subjects every hour. Everything I see or hear is an essay in bud. The world is everywhere whispering essays, and one need only be the world's amanuensis. The proverbial expression which last evening the clown dropped as he trudged homeward to supper, the light of the setting sun on his face, expands before me to a dozen pages. The coffin of the pauper, which to-day I saw carried carelessly along, is as good a subject as the funeral procession of an emperor. . . . Two rustic lovers, whispering between the darkening hedges, is as potent to project my mind into the tender passion as if I had seen Romeo touch the cheek of Juliet in the moonlight garden. Seeing a curly-headed child asleep in the sunshine before a cottage-door is sufficient excuse for a discourse on childhood; quite as good as if I had seen the infant Cain asleep in the lap of Eve with Adam looking on.

⁴ "On the Writing of Essays," in *Dreamthorp*, 1863.

CHAPTER II

Descriptive Diction

I

"Is there, after all, any solace like the solace and consolation of Language? When I am disconcerted by the unpleasing aspects of existence, when for me, as for Hamlet, this fair creation turns to dust and stubble, it is not in Metaphysics nor in Religions that I seek reassurance, but in fine phrases. The thought of gazing on Life's Evening Star makes of ugly old age a pleasing prospect; if I call Death mighty and unpersuaded, it has no terror for me; I am perfectly contented to be cut down as a flower, to flee as a shadow, to be swallowed like a snowflake on the sea. These similes soothe me and effectually console me. I am sad only at the thought that Words must perish like all things mortal; that the most perfect Metaphors must be forgotten when the human race is dust. 'But the iniquity of Oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy.'"

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH.¹

There is no artistic exaggeration in the story which Barrie has made a classic in *Sentimental Tommy*: Tommy's loss of the Hugh Blackadder prize, and his consequent forfeiture of a university education, all because "the hour had gone by just like winking" while he "stuck for the want of a word." Anyone who cares about writing may read that chapter with profit, as an artist's revelation of the artistic consciousness; Tommy, with all the words in the Scotch vocabulary to choose among, would not be content with any but the *inevitable* word.

¹ From *Trivia*, by Logan Pearsall Smith. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co. Used by permission.

It is said that Barrie had Stevenson in mind as his model for Tommy in that particular chapter; that well might be, for Stevenson throughout his writing labored always to find the word which should most perfectly express his meaning, as any one realizes who reads either his letters or his accounts of his own early study and training.

In spite of the sage pronouncement of Mr. Duthie, one of the four ministers who beheld the ignominious defeat of Thomas Sandys: "Surely the art of essay-writing consists in using the first word that comes and hurrying on"—anyone who reads thoughtfully knows that it is just in this choice of the right word that there lies the real distinction between first- and second-rate writing. Whether it is an expression on a face, a color in the sky, a sensation, or a mood that one wishes to convey to others, only the most scrupulous attention to the words one uses will serve. With the wealth of the English language—most complex of tongues—at his disposal, no one should willingly be a pauper in words. Amy Lowell writes in her *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*:²

Of course, language must change; words must be added as life grows more complex and inventions increase. But to impoverish a language by forcing shades of meaning to become confused, is another matter. The picturesque quality of American slang shows us to be an imaginative people; but, on the other hand, this blurring of fine shades of expression proves that we have some distance to go before we can be considered a literary people.

Words have characteristics and personalities as distinct as those of human beings. Chief among the words which must be studied and watched if description is to be forceful are the *verbs*, for through them we gain force and

² Lowell, Amy. *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*. New York. The Macmillan Company, 1917.

precision. A critical study of the diction of poetry will aid greatly here, since over their poetry writers have labored, in many cases, more than over their prose.³ There are verbs which impress the reader at once with the force of motion which the original observer felt: "Rock-ravens *launch* their proud black sails upon the sky"; "the prickly pear *precipitates* downward its bunches of oval plates"; "ridge after ridge of chimney-stacks *running* down-hill one behind another"; "from the edge of this platform the eye *plunges* down"; "the nimble flames *towered, nodded, and swooped* through the surrounding air." It is the verbs which lend effectiveness to Amy Lowell's description of a fire:

Up the spire, behind the lacings of stone, zigzagging in and out of the carved tracings, squirms the fire. It spouts like yellow wheat from the gargoyles, coils round the head of St. John and aureoles him in light. It leaps into the night, and hisses against the rain. . . . Quivering, spearing, thrusting, lapping, streaming, run the flames. . . . The fire dances, lances itself through the doors and lisps and chuckles along the floors.

So, too, Lafcadio Hearn in his description of the progress of a little steam-boat from New Orleans to the Gulf Islands, distinguishes with fine precision among verbs when he says that the boat

crosses the river, slips into some canal-mouth, labors along the artificial channel for awhile, and then leaves it with a scream of joy, to puff her free way down many a league of heavily shadowed bayou. . . . Panting, screaming, scraping her bottom over the sand-bars—all day the little steamer strives to reach the grand blaze of blue open water.

John Gould Fletcher uses these verbs about another ship:

³ The verbs and adjectives in the section that follows have been selected for their *effectiveness*. The student may well inquire whether they are all characterized by *sincerity*, or whether there are instances of the "pathetic fallacy" among them.

She heels and lunges, and buries her bows in the smother, lifting them swiftly and scattering the glistening spray-drops from her jibsails with laughter.

The impression of "laughter" in the last description, and the words *panting* and *screaming* in the previous ones, suggest a second capacity of verbs—their ability to suggest sound. This use of them will be discussed again in connection with "sound description," but it may be suggested here. "The rifles chuckled continually," writes Charles Erskine Scott Wood, and in that word *chuckled* suggests not only a sound, but an ironical connotation. Simeon Strunsky thus describes a scene familiar enough in any growing city: "The steel-workers pace their girders twenty feet high . . . and their pneumatic hammers *scold* and *chatter* through the sultry hours." Stevenson speaks of the *bickering* of the windmills near the Bay of Monterey; Edward Thomas describes the rain as *hissing* on the lawn at Oxford, while to John Gould Fletcher, the music-hall posters of London *squall out*.

But verbs do more than suggest motion and sound; they may in themselves present a complete picture, as does one in H. L. Mencken's *Shrine of Mnemosyne*: "My first view of the tropics, the palm-trees suddenly *bulging* out of the darkness of dawn." The windows of Edinburgh, as Stevenson stood upon the Calton Hill, "kindled and gleamed forth into the dusk"; in Thomas Burke's *Chinese Night*, "a huge Hindoo shuffles, cat-like, against the shops"; Stevenson in *Across the Plains* watched the sand-pipers "trot in and out"; a shop-window, to Amy Lowell, "bleeds red slippers"; Gordon Bottomley saw the "snow sifting thinly down"; to Richard Aldington the swallows seemed to "dive and swirl and whistle"; Charles Erskine Scott Wood draws two verbal pictures in the lines,

Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,

and

A red-bird dipped in sunrise cracks from a poplar's top
His exultant whip above a silver world.

One of the best examples of the different pictures which verbs can convey may be found in John Masefield's short poem *Cargoes*, where the quinquireme of Nineveh is "rowing home to haven," the stately Spanish galleon is "dipping through the tropics," and the dirty British coaster is "butting through the channel in the mad March days." The picture in the following passage from Kenneth Grahame's *Golden Age* owes its exactness entirely to the verbs, both finite and participial, which the author has chosen:

Terrace after terrace of shaven sward, stone-edged, urn-cornered, stepped delicately down to where the stream, now tamed and educated, passed from one to another marble basin, in which, on occasion, gleams of red hinted at gold-fish in among the spreading water-lilies. The scene lay silent and slumbrous in the brooding noonday sun: the drowsing peacock squatted humped on the lawn, no fish leapt in the pools, nor bird declared himself from the environing hedges.

Next in importance to verbs in descriptive sentences are *adjectives*, for they qualify and give gradations of impression to nouns which otherwise might lack shading. The men on lower Broadway, as Strunsky saw them, were "young, limber, almost insolent"; Katherine Mansfield whimsically characterizes the flowers in an amateur painting as "surprised-looking clematis"; to Stevenson the architecture of Chester seemed "bedevilled and furtive"; Hearn in his description of the animals about a Creole house mentions a "quixotic horse." Adjectives are used

by Poe to give the dominant impression in his first paragraph of the *Fall of the House of Usher*: the day is "dull, dark, and soundless"; he sees near him "ghastly tree-stems," "decayed trees," a "gray wall," a "silent tarn"; he feels a "pestilential and mystic vapor, dull and sluggish, faintly discernible and leaden-hued." Above the "sullen waters of the tarn" he perceives the "vacant, eye-like windows" of the House of Usher; and the reader shudders with the observer of this "singularly dreary tract of country." As with verbs, a single adjective may present a complete picture: Louis Untermeyer in *Landscapes* draws "a single poplar, marvellously thinned," and at another time speaks of a "group of pansies with their shrewish faces." The caves which mourned Lycidas were overgrown with wild thyme and the "gadding vine." John Hall Wheelock speaks of the "immaculate stars." "A lantern light," says Robert Frost in *The Fear*, "threw their lurching shadows on the house." There is a fine picture which Charles Erskine Scott Wood has drawn of Indians after a battle:

They lay quiet in great dignity,
Their eyes staring at us, indifferent, almost contemptuous.

Adjectives cannot do much more than Wilfrid Wilson Gibson has made them do in his description of camels in *Hoops*:

And then consider camels; only think
Of camels long enough, and you'd go mad—
With all their humps and lumps; their knobbly knees,
Splay feet and straddle legs; their sagging necks,
Flat flanks and scraggy tails, and monstrous teeth.

All these details, however, accurate as they are, are less memorable than the one line in which he draws a picture of an elephant with "his floppy ears and his inconsequent

tail." Add to the power of adjectives the value of such exact and specific nouns as Lafcadio Hearn's "chirrup of leaping waters"; H. L. Mencken's "faint and blood-curdling rattle of the land-crabs"; Robert Frost's description of the wood-pile with "the slow smokeless burning of decay"; the power of homely, concrete words, as in Shakespeare's refrain, "While greasy Joan doth keel the pot," and one begins to perceive the denotative power of exact and specific words.

II

But we are merely at the beginning of our understanding of the force of words when we speak of their *denotative* power. The tremendous influence which they possess—for both good and evil—lies in their *connotations*; and the connotations of words are as many and various as the personalities of the people who use them. Experience makes words and is made by them. They may express not only the actual fact and the definite feature, but also the spirit which lies behind that fact or that feature. Marguerite Wilkinson in *New Voices* ⁴ brings out this point when she says:

We must demand of all poets, then, that their diction be in harmony with the spirit of their creation. Poems that blaze with the soul of an individual, or of mankind, take to themselves, in the labor of great poets, a flesh of words of one kind with the spirit that flashes through it. In poetry as in life, let the fool wear his motley, let Caliban be known in the coarse body of Caliban, let the Madonna wear her white beauty and her mantle of blue.

The spirit of a word—that individuality which it shares with no other word in the world—is to be sought first of

⁴ Wilkinson, Marguerite. *New Voices*. The Macmillan Company, 1922.

all in its past. There is an heredity, a descent of words, as of people—"the peerage of words," Ruskin calls it. If for no other reason, our contemporary revolt from the classics is deplorable because it forces our vocabularies to be poor, pinched things. As you understand a person's peculiarities much better when you know something of his ancestry and his past, so words take on a new significance when they come, bearing their freight of reminiscence from the many countries of which they have been a part. No one would wish language to be other than a changing, growing, organic thing; yet change and growth imply not only a future but also a past. Constant thoughtless and indiscriminating use renders words meaningless, and cheapens them. To the person who uses the word "awful" a dozen times daily to describe anything from manners to food, there can not be the significance that the author felt in the line, "God made himself an awful rose of dawn." That "school" should once have signified "leisure" suggests that not only our language but our way of life has changed. When Milton said of the Lord General Fairfax,

Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home . . .

he meant by *virtue* something more than one realizes who knows no Latin; so, too, when he says in *Paradise Lost*:

Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell.

Our Saxon words are, as a rule, more exact in denotative power than are our Latin and Greek derivatives; we have kept native forms for simple, customary objects, such as: sun, moon, stars; mother, father, brother, sister; bog, fen, marsh. But classical derivatives possess a power of ab-

stract suggestion, an intellectual flavor, which is, on the whole, lacking in the Saxon; thus when we wish to talk about *ideas* to which these words give rise—relationships, connections, associations—we speak of the *solar, lunar, stellar* systems; of *maternal* and *paternal* affection; of *filial* duty; of *liberty, fraternity, equality*. Unless one feels and understands the significances and the “ghosts of words,” his writing, though it may be fairly clear, will be barren. Like Glendower he may “call spirits from the vasty deep”; but more than one Hotspur may pertinently inquire: “But will they come, when you do call for them?”

Besides the connotations which their own varied meanings give to words, there are literary and historical associations which enrich the sentences in which they are used. Ruskin, in his description of Turner’s *Slave Ship*, speaks of “the fearful hue which signs the sky with horror and mixes the flaming flood with sunlight,—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, *incarnadines the multitudinous sea*.” At once the last four words take us back in memory, beyond Ruskin, beyond Turner, to the pathos of Lady Macbeth’s unconscious cry. In another description, when he says, “the breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct, lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos,” the mind of the reader goes back to Milton’s great scene in which that bridge was built, by Sin and Death. Ruskin delights in such literary connotations; we find him, in *St. Mark’s*, telling of “marbles that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, ‘their bluest veins to kiss’”; while in another place he uses color, with a Biblical reminiscence: “purple and gold and scarlet, like the curtains of God’s tabernacle.” Stevenson also goes to Milton and Scripture for a metaphor, when he says:

"The whole face of the cliff is covered with an arrested fall . . . a sort of fall of the evil angels petrified midway on its career." At another time, as he looks down from the Calton Hill, he sees a little peak-roofed cottage "over which Rizzio's murderers made their escape, where Queen Mary herself, according to gossip, bathed in white wine to entertain her loveliness."

Besides these, there are connotations which may be evoked, particularly by proper nouns, either through the sound of a name, or through the association which we have always had with it. What or where Persepolis is matters not at all to any one who has thrilled to that mighty refrain of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*: "to ride in triumph through Persepolis!" The "wonder" of the Orient may be far from wonderful to people who live in the East, but to the Occidental who knows it only through his imagination, it is a place of fascination and mystery. Milton and Sir Thomas Browne of all our writers have loved the cadences and sonorousness of proper names; in his list of the fallen angels, Milton numbers Moloch, Chemos, Baalim, Ashtaroth, Thammuz, Dagon, Rimmon, Osiris, Isis, Orus—name succeeds name until the reader, like the author, is intoxicated with the sounds. Places, too, Milton summons to our memories, with their wealth of allusion—cities once proud that now are dust, villages which have gloried in their sons, courts of monarchs, rivers, streams, even—because of his pleasure in its strange sound—"Padan-Aram in the field of Luz."

Sir Thomas Browne shared with Milton and their age this love of sonorousness of phrase, and evocation of the past by means of proper names. Lytton Strachey⁵ writes of his *Hydriotaphia*:

⁵ Strachey, Lytton, "Sir Thomas Browne" in *Books and Characters*. Harcourt, Brace & Company. Used by permission.

To crown all, he has scattered through these few pages a multitude of proper names, most of them gorgeous in sound, each of them carrying its own strange freight of reminiscence and allusion from the unknown depths of the past. As one reads, an extraordinary procession of persons seems to pass before one's eyes—Moses, Archimedes, Achilles, Job, Hector and Charles the Fifth, Cardan, Alaric, Gordianus and Pilate, Homer, Cambyzes, and the Canaanitish woman.

III

The associative power of words lies not only in the memories and images which they themselves call up; even more, perhaps, it lies in their ability, through figures of speech, to suggest double impressions. The fundamental purpose of figures of speech is to add to the original meaning the complexity of a completely different thought—a process as mysterious as is the dream. "A perfect user of words," says Walt Whitman in *An American Primer*, "uses things—they exude in power and beauty from him,—miracles from his hands, miracles from his mouth,—lilies, clouds, sunshine, women, poured copiously . . ."

During the last few years there has developed, particularly in American poetry, a tendency to which we give the name *Imagism*. Much misunderstanding and much criticism of the movement—deserved when the movement has gone to extremes—would have been avoided had the critics studied with some care the *manifesto* issued by the original small group of writers.⁶ Amy Lowell, herself one of the Imagists, has this to say of the ideas which they presented:⁷

We see therefore that these canons boil down into something like the following succinct statements: simplicity, directness of speech; subtlety and beauty of rhythm; individualistic freedom

⁶ *Some Imagist Poets*, Houghton Mifflin Company. 1916.

⁷ Lowell, Amy, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*. 1917.

of idea; clearness and vividness of presentation; and condensation. Not new principles, by any means, as the writers admit, but "fallen into desuetude."

Those several statements which the Imagists hold as the fundamentals of effective poetry might well be taken as fundamental to all effective writing; they are particularly true of description. The word *imagism*, as these writers themselves wish to make clear, does not mean merely—or even primarily—the use of images in the sense of figures of speech. One of them says very definitely: ⁸

Imagism refers to the manner of presentation, not to the subject. It means a clear presentation of whatever the author wishes to convey. Now he may wish to convey a mood of indecision, in which case the poem should be indecisive; he may wish to bring before his reader the constantly shifting and changing lights over a landscape, or the varying attitudes of mind of a person under strong emotion, then his poem must shift and change to present this clearly. The "exact" word does not mean the word which exactly describes the object in itself, it means the "exact" word which brings the effect of that object before the reader as it presented itself to the poet's mind at the time of writing the poem. Imagists deal but little with similes, although much of their poetry is metaphorical. The reason for this is that, while acknowledging the figure to be an integral part of poetry, they feel that the constant imposing of one figure upon another in the same poem blurs the general effect.

Carried to an extreme as they have been in such lines as these:

Evening is spread out against the sky—
Like a patient etherized upon the table,

or this—whatever it may mean!—

Pig Cupid his rosy snout
Rooting erotic garbage,

these figures of speech indicate merely an attempt at eccentricity. We feel in such figures a deliberate striving

⁸ *Some Imagist Poets, 1916, Preface*, pp. v ff. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

for the bizarre and the unexpected—a complete lack of that *sincerity* which has been spoken of as the fundamental characteristic of all true art. That is not to say that there may not be sincerity in many figures of speech which seem at first sight untrue; because *we* have never felt certain similarities is no proof that another person has not. We may question the universality of such figures, hardly their validity. There are few readers who deny the genuineness and sincerity of William Blake; yet his figures of speech often seem at first reading grotesque or meaningless. It may be said in general that *deliberate* striving for effective figures of speech rarely results in anything but artificiality. Unless the similarity comes spontaneously, even inevitably, it is seldom true or effective. We have spoken earlier of the Greek quality of *directness*, that almost unerring ability of theirs to see things as they were without exaggeration and without understatement. The student of description may well, before going further with this problem, read the two chapters in Ruskin's *Modern Painters* in which he discusses this clarity and directness of the Greek and contrasts it with the spirit of modern description.⁹

The different effects which are produced by exactly the same figure of speech may be observed by comparing the last line of Richard Aldington's *Lesbia*:

You morsel left half-cold on Cæsar's plate,

with the original expression in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (III. 13):

I found you as a morsel cold upon
Dead Cæsar's trencher.

⁹ Chapter xii, *Of the Pathetic Fallacy*; Chapter xiii, *Of Classical Landscape*.

With all their potentialities for ambiguity, falseness, and anticlimax, figures of speech and images in general offer powerful aid to the descriptive artist who truly thinks in such terms. Here are three phrases, in each of which the author suggests in varying degree the terrors that lurk in Nature: Hearn speaks of cypresses "grotesque as gatherings of fetich-gods"; Stevenson says: "The crouching, hardy, live-oaks flourish singly or in thickets—the kind of wood for murderers to crawl among"; Hardy tells of "oozing lumps of fleshy fungi, which at this season lay scattered about the heath like the rotten liver and lungs of some colossal animal." On the other hand figures of speech may produce exquisite impressions. Hearn in the same essay, speaks of girls in the gulf islands "gracile as the palmettos that sway above them"; and Amy Lowell in her poem *A Lady* says:

You are beautiful and faded
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord.

Carl Sandburg saw, in an unromantic brickyard, transformed by the magic of night,

Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

Louis Untermeyer speaks of the "sweet pastoral of an empty street"; John Gould Fletcher saw

Wavering, dancing, bodiless, colourless, unreal,
The long, thin, lazy fingers of the heat.

More striking—though not therefore more impressive—are such figures as these, all taken from modern poetry:

The white sea labors, line on plunging line,
Toward a blind goal.

(John Hall Wheelock.)

The heaven opens her stars,
 A sudden sword of moonlight strikes on the sea.
 (Ibid.)

The winter constellations that are like patient ox-eyes.
 (John Gould Fletcher.)

. . . the bright bare Day
 Like a tall diver poised above the surge
 Of ebony night
 (William Rose Benet.)

Each tree
 A moment flutters, full of shutting wings.
 (Francis Ledwidge.)

And like an apron full of jewels
 The dewy cobweb swings.
 (Ibid.)

And in dark furrows of the night there tills
 A jeweled plough.
 (Ibid.)

Milton is the great master of the figure of speech in English. The exactness and perfection of the details in his Homeric similes shows the same sort of artistry that one sees in the work of Renaissance silversmiths. Like Homer's, Milton's mind seems always to find the inevitable comparison. The fallen angels, as they lie stunned and unconscious on the "burning marle" seem to Satan at first

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
 In Vallombrosa.

When, at his call, they spring up before him, it is "as when the potent rod of Amram's son . . . up-called a pitchy cloud of locusts," and when their ranks surge forward, they move like the "barbarous sons" of the "populous North," who "came like a deluge on the South."

One of the most magnificent achievements in our language is Milton's study of Satan, his ambitious struggle against God, his fall, and his gradual degeneration. That effect of degeneration, handled so subtly by Milton that only imperceptibly does the reader realize that his feeling for Satan has changed from admiration to dislike, is produced almost entirely by the figures of speech which Milton has used about Satan. No one will deny that, in the earlier books of *Paradise Lost*, Satan is, if not Milton's hero, yet his greatest character; rebel as he himself was, he could not feel without sympathy a rebellion even against God. The Satan who fell from Heaven did not lose thereby all his glory and his majesty; that would not have suited Milton's purpose, either artistically or ethically: for man, as Milton carefully shows, becomes degenerate not by *one* evil choice, but by a succession of choices. Thus his figures of speech in the early books are chosen to bring out Satan's essential greatness. He is mighty in stature, we see at once; lying on the burning lake, he seems, Milton says, like "Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove" or "that sea-beast Leviathan, which God of all his works created hugest." When he surveys the host of the fallen angels,

He, above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower.

His splendor is like that of the sun—the sun through the morning mist, to be sure, or the sun which

behind the moon
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds,

yet still the sun, as still the glorious angel. It is this majestic Satan who sits exalted on the throne of Pandemo-

nium, who meets Death face to face at the gate of Hell, who spurns the earth and "spreads his sail-broad vans" for flight through Chaos; still the great figure which, after the dread journey, "like the weather-beaten vessel holds gladly the port."

From that time on, the gradual degeneration of Satan begins. Still capable of giving up his plan of tempting man, he pauses to survey the newly-created world; but Milton suggests what his ultimate choice will be by his next figure of speech, for Satan descends upon the earth like "a vulture"—still mighty but essentially evil. As he pauses to survey the beauty of Eden, he is a "scout" looking down upon "the goodly prospect of some foreign land." Then he leaps with one bound over the wall of Eden, and Milton suggests in two figures of speech his power and his ability to use it for evil:

As when a prowling wolf . . .
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold,
Or as a thief . . .
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles—
So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold.

Like a "cormorant" Satan sits upon the Tree of Life, meditating not life but death. The comparisons become gradually less and less exalted: a wolf, a thief, a cormorant,—and then Satan is found by God's angels "squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve." In spite of his descent, however, he has not yet lost all his power of becoming his original self, for when the angels address him,

Up he starts
Discovered and surprised, as when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder. . . .
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air,

and, to the charges of the angels,

The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage,
But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on.

The last of the great conceptions of Satan occurs in this same passage, when he stands face to face with Gabriel:

On th' other side, Satan, alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Tenerife or Atlas unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horror plumed.

But Satan has consistently chosen evil rather than good; and from this time on his majesty becomes less and less; it is he who *chooses* to become the serpent, who picks from all the beasts of the field this lowest one; although he seems to Eve, before she has eaten of the fruit of the tree, to be beautiful in his outward form, he is nevertheless bestial; and ultimately, when, his mission performed, he returns to Hell to summon his companions to share with him the glories of earth, the final figure of speech which Milton uses makes us realize what the degeneration has been. Satan stands to address his legions; they listen, admiringly; he waits to hear "their universal shout and high applause"; instead he hears from innumerable tongues "a dismal hiss"; and then the transformation occurs:

His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining
Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell,
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain.

The change has become complete; what before had been only a figure of speech has become an actuality; no longer *like* a serpent, Satan *is* the serpent.

CHAPTER III

Point of View

As the photographer or sketcher chooses carefully the position from which his subject is best observed, so the artist in words must first determine what his point of view is to be. The photographer is definitely limited by the focus of his camera; he cannot include in his picture anything that does not come within its range—a limitation which is often rather an advantage since he is thus assured of the unity of his picture, if he has chosen his position well. The artist in pencil, color, or words has more opportunity—and more temptation—to enlarge his horizon, for he may consciously include in his picture objects which are not at the moment in the scene before him, but which he feels could or should be there. The range of the human eye is more extensive than that of the camera, and the range of the human mind is unlimited. A casual glance over the country from the top of a hill will reveal more than anyone can describe in words; the observer is faced at once with the problem of deciding how much of what he sees he will report, and what are the significant details of the scene.

The point of view of a writer may be either physical or mental; it is, indeed, usually a combination of the two. Physically, one must adopt a certain definite position in order to see the object, and that position must be explained to the audience. When we take friends to see our favorite scenes, we decide in our own minds the exact spot from which we can best see the thing as a whole, and

we contrive—if we have a sense of the dramatic—to keep them from looking until the moment when the view is best. The suddenness of point of view is often one of its most attractive features; unexpectedness emphasizes as nothing else can. Some such idea Herman Melville had in mind when he allowed his character and his readers in *Typee* to come suddenly and unexpectedly upon their first view of a Marquesan landscape. “I chanced to push aside a branch,” says his speaker, “and by so doing suddenly disclosed to my view a scene which even now I can recall with all the vividness of a first impression.” The view from the top of a hill is usually effective because it allows perspective; writer after writer has chosen a hill top as the best position from which to describe either town or country. The speaker in W. H. Hudson’s *Purple Land* relates that he turned out of his way in order to ascend a hill from which he might get a general view of the surroundings; Lafcadio Hearn took notes for his essay on Fuji-no-Yama while he was actually making the ascent of the mountain. One of the finest descriptions from the top of a hill is Stevenson’s picture of Edinburgh from the Calton Hill; an interesting comparison might be made between that description, and the one of Edinburgh drawn by Quiller-Couch in the last chapters of Stevenson’s *St. Ives*, which Quiller-Couch completed after Stevenson’s death; his point of view in that description is from a balloon. Gilbert Chesterton suggests the effectiveness of a view from the top of a hill in his poem “On the Downs”:

When you came over the top of the world
In the great day on the Downs,
The air was crisp and the clouds were curled,
And under your feet were spire and street,
And seven English towns.

To be sure a hill-top is not the only possible position from which to observe even "seven English towns." A spire, a steeple, the top of a monument will sometimes serve even more effectively. It is more than desire to test endurance which leads thousands of people annually to climb to summits, both of spires and of mountains. From such height one gains in a moment the general plan of city and country, which months spent on level ground may not give. There is, too, a mental perspective given by elevations above the usual details of our world which nearly all writers from heights have stressed; things fall into new relations; the important is seen to be unimportant; men and women become pigmies. Lucian has written an extraordinary dialogue of the trip which Charon, ferryman of the dead, once made to the world in order to find out, if he could, why the spirits of the dead struggled so to stay in the world; instead of going about the streets of cities, the philosophical ferryman betook himself to a high hill from which he could see all the world; there he beheld scurrying mortals, breathlessly striving to do unnecessary things, crowded streets with people jostling one another, avarice, greed, jealousy, trouble; ceaseless striving, with no thought of the meaning of it all. With a sardonic smile, the ageless boatman summed it all up—there they go, he says in effect, kings, counsellors, beggars, thieves, all seeking they know not what—and never a thought for Charon. And with that he betook himself again to the banks of the mournful river Styx to wait calmly and patiently for the inevitable descent of each of these men to him.

The very advantages of the perspective from a height may lead the writer into danger. Stevenson stresses that fact in his description of Edinburgh. One sees too far and too much; the eye and the mind are confused,

and the writer is in danger of showing that confusion by over- or under-emphasis. He says:

How they are all tilted by the inclination of the ground; how each stands out in delicate relief against the rest, what manifold detail, and play of sun and shadow, animate and accentuate the picture, is a matter for a person on the spot, and turning swiftly on his heels, to grasp and bind together in one comprehensive look. . . . The multiplicity embarrasses the eye; and the mind, among so much, suffers itself to grow absorbed with single points. You remark a tree in a hedgerow, or follow a cart along a country road. You turn to the city, and see children, dwarfed by distance into pigmies, at play about suburban doorsteps; you have a glimpse upon a thoroughfare where people are dimly moving; you note ridge after ridge of chimney-stacks running down-hill! one behind another, and church spires rising bravely from the sea of roofs. At one of the innumerable windows, you watch a figure moving; on one of the multitude of roofs, you watch clambering chimney-sweeps.

The artist in words, as a rule, follows the psychological order in presenting his details. The chances are—though no more definite rules can be given for the writing of description than for the using of the human eye—that one will receive first a *general* impression, after which particular details will begin to make themselves noticed. An excellent example of such point of view is the scene in Browning's *Saul* in which David, not knowing what to expect, enters the tent of Saul:

The tent was unlooped;

I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,

That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness: but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof, showed Saul.

Victor Hugo, when he described Paris from the top of Notre Dame, followed the psychological order of details. The first impression, he said, was "a dazzling confusion of roofs, chimneys, streets, bridges, squares, spires, steeples. All burst upon the eye at once." Yet as he recovered from his bewilderment, his mind gradually imposed order upon this chaotic multiplicity, and he described in turn the various districts of Paris which lay beneath his gaze.

So far we have been considering merely the *static* point of view. Neither the observer nor his subject moves in such description. There may be, of course, moving figures in the distance, but they will be of secondary importance. The *progressive* point of view comes into use when either the observer or the observed continues to move, and when the movement itself is a necessary part of the scene. Such a point of view implies usually both *order in space* and *order in time*. The principle upon which moving-pictures are made may be applied here. In "slowed-up" moving pictures, one is able to see that any given action is really a series of an infinite number of "still life" pictures. Moving, after all, consists merely in changing from one fixed position to another. One of the most effective methods of narration—a method which caricaturists and advertising artists know well!—is the use of two pictures, one showing an object "before" something has happened, the other the same object "after." The element of time which has been introduced has changed a simple description into a narrative, poignant, dramatic, or amusing. The chief difference between description and narration, indeed, lies in this introduction of the element of *time*.

In some progressive descriptions, it will be found that the observer maintains his position while the scene moves;

in others, the opposite is true. The spectator at the moving-picture play is in the first position; pictures of the whole world may pass before his eyes while he sits still; so, too, the observer of the circus parade sees the procession, while he himself remains in one place. Lew Wallace in *The Prince of India* chooses such a situation for his description of the passing of the caravans. More usual, perhaps, in descriptive writing, is the other point of view—that of the moving spectator. The passenger on the train or street-car, the driver of an automobile, may catch glimpses of people, animals, villages, fields, in rapid succession. A boat trip, particularly along the coast or down a river, with the shore in sight, offers opportunity for observation of details at more leisure. Better than any of these, in many ways, is the leisurely walk down a street, or the slow ascent of a mountain on foot. Pierre Loti's ascent of the great rock-temple at Tanjore enables him to describe not only the rooms in the structure, but the occasional glimpses of the world outside. Robert Cortes Holliday, as a fish reporter, explores an unfamiliar section of New York; Simeon Strunsky in his sketch *The Street* shows himself sauntering down one of the most familiar streets in the world, and finding new problems to ponder on as he goes.

These points of view are largely physical; they depend upon the actual place and time in which the observer finds himself. Yet even in the simplest of them we may recognize the fact that point of view is also *mental*. Not everyone sees New York as the fish reporter saw it, and of that hurrying throng on Broadway, how many saw what Strunsky saw? The same scene may be very different to two people who survey it with the eyes of experience or of desire. Hamlin Garland in *Up the Coolly* shows a man returning to his Wisconsin home after an

absence of ten years; his point of view is naturally colored by reminiscence. Later in the same tale Hamlin Garland manages to show us the same locality as it seems to two brothers, one of whom has stayed at home while the other has gone out into the world. One's first view of a new city may be a completely impersonal one, or it may be pregnant with hopes or fears for the future; one's last view of it—whether happily or not—must be colored by memory. Association and experience do much to form the mental point of view; the American who has grown up loving English or Roman history and literature does not go as a stranger to England or to Rome; how often, to an American, the first view of Europe seems not novelty, but remembrance!

The simplest form of mental point of view is to be found in those comparisons which we frequently make in trying to describe a scene unfamiliar to our hearers. It is impossible for the human mind to imagine something which has no analogy in its experience; when the Greeks wished to create new monsters, they made them by combining beasts they already knew, and thus there came into the world "Gorgons and Hydras and Chimeras dire." So when Ruskin wishes to draw for us a mental picture of the church of Santa Croce, he compares its fundamental structure to the letter T; Victor Hugo, in one of the most lucid descriptions in literature, has given in a paragraph a memorable picture of the battlefield at Waterloo simply by comparing it to the letter A. Geometrical figures are equally effective: Gibbon describes Byzantium as an unequal triangle; Jefferies and Wordsworth use the figure of a circle, or a wheel with converging spokes, the one to describe the little district before the Royal Exchange, the other to describe the English Lake Country. Other comparative figures are more picturesque. Both

Hugo and Stevenson have used the comparison with a boat, Hugo in his description of Paris from Notre Dame to show the "island of the City" like a "ship grounded in the Seine"; Stevenson in *An Inland Voyage* to describe Noyon Cathedral:

As it flanges out in three wide terraces, and settles down broadly on the earth, it looks like the poop of some great old battle-ship. Hollow-backed buttresses carry vases, which figure for the stern lanterns. There is a roll in the ground and the towers just appear above the pitch of the roof, as though the good ship were bowing lazily over an Atlantic swell. At any moment it might be a hundred feet away from you, climbing the next billow. At any moment, a window might open, and some old admiral thrust forth a cocked hat and proceed to take an observation.

Still more vivid, though not more effective, are Thoreau's comparison of Cape Cod to "the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts"—a figure which inevitably recalls our usual analogy between the peninsula of Italy and a human leg, Sicily and the football—and Stevenson's quoted analogy between the Bay of Monterey and a bent fish-hook.

Two very different kinds of description, both of which depend upon mental point of view, are *description by dominant impression* and *reminiscent description*. The scenes and people we see each day produce on us varying impressions; we notice the variety rather than the unity of the world. Yet there are moods in which our minds—often without conscious intention on our part—constantly stress one dominant impression in a scene. This is not to say, of course, that all description—all writing, indeed, does not attempt to produce some dominant impression; but there are certain occasions in which everything else *must* be subordinated to some one outstanding impression. Extremes of heat and cold, brightness and gloom,

extremes of grief, anger, happiness, merriment may thus transform the world. One's first view of the Alps may impress one so greatly with majesty and sublimity that all other sensations and reactions are for the moment excluded. There are buildings, even rooms, which produce in the mind of the observer a dominant impression; the calm perfection of Greek architecture, the ornateness of the Corinthian, the restless striving of the Gothic—all these are, or may be dominant impressions. Henry Adams felt in the steep precipitousness of Mont St. Michel an arresting energy; Ruskin saw in St. Mark's "a confusion of delight"; Meredith, in describing the "day of enchantment" of Richard Feverel and Lucy, emphasized the "golden" world, of youthful love. Dickens and Poe are masters of this sort of description. Though both of them sometimes overuse the device so that it becomes obvious and frequently monotonous, no one has been more successful with it than have they. It is, on the one hand, the method of the caricaturist, who seizes one significant feature, and purposely overemphasizes it. Men and women are in reality not merely the one feature or the one characteristic which they seem to be in Dickens; yet they do have dominant characteristics. Often Dickens, by means of this device, secures interesting double effects; no one can fail to see that it is not mere chance that he has chosen a foggy day on which to describe the Courts of Chancery in *Bleak House*; no one misses the significance in *A Tale of Two Cities* of the merrymaking over the broken wine-cask in the streets of Paris, when the laughing faces of the people seem for the moment to be stained with blood. Poe's use of the method differs from that of Dickens in that he is not a caricaturist; when he overemphasizes, it is usually for

the purpose of accentuating horror or mystery. Dickens' Uriah Heep was unpleasantly pale; but there was about his pallor none of the compelling horror of Poe's Ligeia.

Two artistic devices strengthen the effect of this form of description: repetition and contrast of details. The repetition in Dickens' description of fog in London or heat in Marseilles includes not only details, but the repetition of actual words; the same device is used by Amy Lowell in *The Bombardment*. The actual reflection of the House of Usher in "the black and lurid tarn" does not more accentuate the horror than does the author's reflection of the spirit of that dwelling in the "white trunks of decayed trees," in the "pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued," or in the foreboding mind of the observer of the scene. The principle of contrast is equally effective; one may be all the more alone because he is in a crowd; and the first reaction to grief is often a bitter resentment, or a dull wonder, that the sun still shines and the birds sing. We feel that nature should reflect our moods. On the rainy day which Hamlin Garland describes in "Up the Coolly": "The chickens seemed depressed, *but the irrepressible blue-jay screamed amid it all*, with the same insolent spirit, his plumage untarnished by the wet." The contrast to the unnatural severity of Mr. Massy's stateroom, as Conrad described it, was afforded by Nature herself: "The screen of leaves on the bank passing as if unrolled endlessly in the round opening of the port, sent a wavering network of light and shade into the place." My Lady Dedlock's loneliness—which she would be the last to admit—was accentuated by her seeing the wife and child of the keeper run out into the rain to meet him. The energy of the great figure of St.

Michael on his mount, in Henry Adams' description, emphasizes the "repose and self-restraint" of the Norman architecture.

The last decade has witnessed a steadily growing popularity of reminiscent description, in biography and autobiography, in poetry, in reminiscent sketches, in novels. One of the most popular of all forms of novel-writing during the last few years has been the thinly-veiled "confession" or "apologia," in which an author goes back into his past in order to explain his present. Written sometimes in the first and sometimes in the third person, the novel, at least in the early chapters, is little more than a series of pictures of earliest childhood memories. Such forms of writing have received fresh impetus from the discoveries and theories of modern psychology, with its emphasis upon "suppressed desires," inhibitions, "complexes," and the influence of the subconscious. Reminiscence has been a natural and necessary part of the modern "individualistic novel," which, departing sharply from the older ideas of the necessity of plot and action, declares that the only important thing in the universe is the individual, and that all human beings are, as individuals, supremely interesting—at least to themselves! Whatever the faults or the virtues of the reminiscent novel, it is certain that some of the most effective descriptive writing of the last few years is to be found in reminiscent description.

Memories of individuals vary greatly, both in regard to the vividness of early impressions, and in regard to sense impressions. Henry Adams, in an extremely interesting portion of his autobiography, says that his earliest sense-memory was of light and color: "He found himself sitting on a yellow kitchen floor in strong sunlight." His next remembered sensation was of discomfort. Later

he revelled in a world which existed for him mainly through the senses of smell and taste; he implies that it is only with years and "education" that these two senses, so much more powerful in animals than in man, grow weak. All the sensations of youth, he shows, are elemental and crude, until the artificial effects of education have refined them. It is those very crude and elemental qualities which give power to much reminiscent description. The world as it used to be will always seem to man more glorious than the world as it is—hence the myths and fable of a Golden Age. Reminiscent description is not necessarily limited to memory of childhood; in many of Conrad's novels, for example, the chief speaker is a man who looks back over many years at sea, but whose memories do not, as a rule go back to childhood; yet memories of youth undoubtedly offer the most attractive field for this kind of writing. Sometimes the point of view in such sketches is that of the child himself: Kenneth Grahame in *The Golden Age* and Hugh Walpole in *Jeremy* interpret the world as the child actually saw it. Who does not sympathize with the puzzled contempt of the children in *The Golden Age* for those "Olympians" who say and do meaningless things? Or with the new world that opened for Hugh Walpole's Jeremy with the toy farm given him by his one discerning relative (who understood children, and was therefore not understood by adults)? Stevenson in the *Lantern-Bearers* carefully selected from among the many details of the village only those which the boys themselves would have noticed: "shops with golf-balls and bottled lollipops; another shop with penny pickwicks (that remarkable cigar) and the *London Journal*, dear to me for its startling pictures, and a few novels, dear for their suggestive names." Walter de la Mare's charming preface

to his anthology *Come Hither* sketches beautifully the "Thrae" of childhood; all of us have set out for "East Dene," though we have called it by other names, and have discovered the "Thrae" in which we, too, are but trespassers; not all of us have been fortunate enough to chance upon such a room as Mr. Nahum's with its remarkable volume "Theotherworlde." The charm of the old boat-house to little David Copperfield lay in the fact that it was of just the right size for childhood; E. V. Lucas in *Genevra's Money* pictures the rapture of children to whom an old sleeping-car is given for their very own; the engines in Broad Street Station in Morley's sketch in *Travels in Philadelphia*, are seen by the eyes of the child—eyes so much nearer the big wheels than are adult eyes; the pictures on Lamb's old china, on the band-boxes in Bagby's *Virginia Gentleman*, and on the dishes in Peggotty's house, with their conventionalized designs and their curious colors, are pictures eternally dear to children. *Treasure Island* is the masterpiece of reminiscence; for it contains in it every thing one ever did—though only in imagination—in the world of childhood.

Other writers of reminiscent description have been on the whole less interested in interpreting the actual picture which the child saw than in suggesting the effect of that picture upon the mind of the child. Thus Ludwig Lewisohn devotes the first chapters of *Upstream* to a description of the Berlin of the eighties, as it was seen by him in childhood, and to the background which he found as a child in America. Henry Adams, in his autobiography which has already been mentioned, is much less interested in pictures of childhood for their own sake than in a study of the influence which the environment of childhood had upon him. Such reminiscent description will almost inevitably, after the first few pages or chap-

ters, pass over into exposition; whereas reminiscence of the first type, while occasionally expository in purpose, will usually be found either as a part of narrative, or existing by itself merely through the interest and delight of humanity in that mysterious process—memory.

STATIC

A MARQUESAN LANDSCAPE

I chanced to push aside a branch, and by so doing suddenly disclosed to my view a scene which even now I can recall with all the vividness of the first impression. Had a glimpse of the gardens of Paradise been revealed to me, I could scarcely have been more ravished with the sight.

From the spot where I lay transfixed with surprise and delight, I looked straight down into the bosom of a valley, which swept away in long wavy undulations to the blue waters in the distance. Midway towards the sea, and peering here and there amidst the foliage, might be seen the palmetto-thatched houses of its inhabitants glistening in the sun that had bleached them to a dazzling whiteness. The vale was more than three leagues in length, and about a mile across at its greatest width.

On either side it appeared hemmed in by steep and green acclivities, which, uniting near the spot where I lay, formed an abrupt and semicircular termination of grassy cliffs and precipices hundreds of feet in height, over which flowed numberless small cascades. But the crowning beauty of the prospect was its universal verdure; and in this indeed consists, I believe, the peculiar charm of every Polynesian^{or} landscape. Everywhere below me, from the base of the precipice upon whose very verge I had been unconsciously reposing, the surface of

the vale presented a mass of foliage, spread with such rich profusion that it was impossible to determine of what description of trees it consisted.

But perhaps there was nothing about the scenery I beheld more impressive than those silent cascades, whose slender threads of water, after leaping down the steep cliffs, were lost amidst the rich herbage of the valley.

Over all the landscape there reigned the most hushed repose, which I almost feared to break lest, like the enchanted gardens in the fairy tale, a single syllable might dissolve the spell. For a long time, forgetful alike of my own situation, and the vicinity of my still slumbering companion, I remained gazing around me, hardly able to comprehend by what means I had thus suddenly been made a spectator of such a scene.

Herman Melville, *Typee*. By permission of
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FROM THE SUMMIT OF A HILL

A day unusually brilliant even for this bright climate was drawing to a close, it being within about two hours of sunset, when I turned out of my way to ascend a hill with a very long ridge-like summit, falling away at one end, appearing like the last sierra of a range just where it dies down into the level plain; only in this instance the range itself did not exist. The solitary hill was covered with short tussocks of yellow, wiry grass, with occasional bushes, while near the summit large slabs of sandstone appeared just above the surface, looking like gravestones in some old village churchyard, with all their inscriptions obliterated by time and weather. From this elevation, which was about a hundred feet above the plain, I wished to survey the country before me, for I was tired and

hungry, so was my horse, and I was anxious to find a resting-place before night. Before me the country stretched away in vast undulations towards the ocean which was not, however, in sight. Not the faintest stain of vapour appeared on the immense crystalline dome of heaven, while the stillness and transparency of the atmosphere seemed almost preternatural. A blue gleam of water, south-east of where I stood and many leagues distant, I took to be the lake of Rocha; on the western horizon were faint blue cloud-like masses with pearly peaks. They were not clouds, however, but the sierras of the range weirdly named *Cuchilla de las Animas*—Ghost-haunted mountains. At length, like a person who puts his binocular in his pocket and begins to look about him, I recalled my vision from its wanderings over illimitable space to examine the objects close at hand. On the slope of the hill, sixty yards from my standpoint, were some deep green, dwarf bushes, each bush looking in that still brilliant sunshine as if it had been hewn out of a block of malachite; and on the pale purple solana-^{meaning}
aceous flowers covering them some humble-bees were feeding. It was the humming of the bees coming distinctly to my ears that first attracted my attention to the bushes; for so still was the atmosphere that at that distance apart—sixty yards—two persons might have conversed easily without raising their voices. Much further down, about two hundred yards from the bushes, a harrier hawk stood on the ground, tearing at something it had captured, feeding in that savage, suspicious manner usual with hawks, with long pauses between the bites. Over the harrier hovered a brown milvago hawk, a vulture-like bird in its habits, that lives by picking up unconsidered trifles. Envious at the other's good fortune, or fearing, perhaps, that not even the crumbs or feathers of the feast

where located

were going to be left, it was persecuting the harrier by darting down at intervals with an angry cry and aiming a blow with its wing. The harrier methodically ducked its head each time its tormentor rushed down at it, after which it would tear its prey again in its uncomfortable manner. Further away, in the depression running along at the foot of the hill, meandered a small stream so filled with aquatic grasses and plants that the water was quite concealed, its course appearing like a vivid green snake, miles long, lying there basking in the sunshine. At the point of the stream nearest to me an old man was seated on the ground, apparently washing himself, for he was stooping over a little pool of water, while behind him stood his horse with patient, drooping head, occasionally switching off the flies with its tail. A mile further on stood a dwelling, which looked to me like an old estancia-house, surrounded by large shade trees, growing singly or in irregular clumps. It was the only house near, but after gazing at it for some time, I concluded that it was uninhabited. For even at that distance I could see plainly that there were no human beings moving about it, no horse or other domestic animal near, and there were certainly no hedges or enclosures of any description.

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THE HERMIT'S CABIN

It is in the Thebaid, at the summit of a mountain, upon a platform, rounded off into the form of a demilune and enclosed by huge stones.

The Hermit's cabin appears in the background. It is built of mud and reeds, it is flat-roofed and doorless. A pitcher and a loaf of bread can be distinguished within;

also, in the middle of the apartment a large book resting on a wooden stela; while here and there, fragments of basketwork, two or three mats, a basket, and a knife lie upon the ground.

Some ten paces from the hut, there is a long cross planted in the soil; and, at the other end of the platform, an aged and twisted palm tree leans over the abyss; for the sides of the mountain are perpendicular and the Nile appears to form a lake at the foot of the cliff.

The view to right and left is broken by the barrier of rocks. But on the desert-side, like a vast succession of sandy beaches, immense undulations of an ashen-blond color extend one behind the other, rising higher as they recede; and far in the distance, beyond the sands, the Libyan chain forms a chalk-colored wall, lightly shaded by violet mists. On the opposite side the sun is sinking. In the north the sky is of a pearl-gray tint, while at the zenith purple clouds disposed like the tufts of a gigantic mane, lengthen themselves against the blue vault. These streaks of flame take darker tones; the azure spots turn to a nacreous pallor; the shrubs, the pebbles, the earth, all now seem hard as bronze; and throughout space there floats a golden dust so fine as to become confounded with the vibrations of the light.

Saint Anthony, who has a long beard, long hair, and wears a tunic of goat skin, is seated on the ground cross-legged, and is occupied in weaving mats.

Gustave Flaubert, *Temptation of St. Anthony*.

MY HOME

My home was built upon the slope of a hill, with a little orchard stretching down before it, and a garden rising behind. At a considerable distance beyond and

round
rise
copy
 beneath the orchard, a rivulet flowed through meadows and turned a mill; while, above the garden, the summit of the hill was crowned by a few gray rocks, from which a yew-tree grew, solitary and bare. Extending at each side of the orchard, toward the brook, two scattered patches of cottages lay nestled among their gardens; and beyond this streamlet and the little mill and bridge, another slight eminence arose, divided into green fields, tufted and bordered with copsewood, and crested by a ruined castle, contemporary, as was said, with the Conquest. I know not whether these things in truth made up a prospect of much beauty. Since I was eight years old, I have never seen them; but I well know that no landscape I have since beheld, no picture of Claude or Salvator, gave me half the impression of living, heartfelt, perfect beauty which fills my mind when I think of that green valley, that sparkling rivulet, that broken fortress of dark antiquity, and that hill with its aged yew and breezy summit, from which I have so often looked over the broad stretch of verdure beneath it, and the country-town, and church-tower, silent and white beyond.

John Sterling, quoted in Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

FROM A JAPANESE WINDOW

I slide open my little Japanese paper window to look out upon the morning over a soft green cloud of foliage rising from the river-bounded garden below. Before me, tremulously mirroring everything upon its farther side, glimmers the broad glassy mouth of the Ohashi-gawa, opening into the Shinji Lake, which spreads out broadly to the right in a dim grey frame of peaks. . . . But oh, the charm of the vision,—those first ghostly love-colours

of a morning steeped in mist soft as sleep itself! . . . Long reaches of faintly-tinted vapour cloud the far lake verge. . . . All the bases of the mountains are veiled by them. . . . So that the lake appears incomparably larger than it really is, and not an actual lake, but a beautiful spectral sea of the same tint as the dawn-sky and mixing with it, while peak-tips rise like islands from the brume—an exquisite chaos, ever changing aspect as the delicate fogs rise, slowly, very slowly. As the sun's yellow rim comes into sight, fine thin lines of warmer tone—violets and opalines—shoot across the flood, tree-tops take tender fire . . . Looking sunward, up the long Ohashi-gawa, beyond the many-pillared wooden bridge, one high-pooped junk, just hoisting sail, seems to me the most fantastically beautiful craft I ever saw—a dream of Orient seas, so idealized by the vapour is it; the ghost of a junk, but a ghost that catches the light as clouds do; a shape of gold mist, seemingly semi-diaphanous, and suspended in pale blue light.

The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

EREWHON

The country was the grandest that can be imagined. How often have I sat on the mountain side and watched the waving downs, with the two white specks of huts in the distance, and the little square of garden behind them; the paddock with a patch of bright green oats above the huts, and the yards and wool-sheds down on the flat below; all seen as through the wrong end of a telescope, so clear and brilliant was the air, or as upon a colossal model or map spread out beneath me. Beyond the

downs was a plain, going down to a river of great size, on the farther side of which there were other high mountains, with the winter's snow still not quite melted; up the river, which ran winding in many streams over a bed some two miles broad, I looked upon the second great chain, and could see a narrow gorge where the river retired and was lost. I knew that there was a range still farther back; but except from one place near the very top of my own mountain, no part of it was visible; from this point, however, I saw, whenever there were no clouds, a single snow-clad peak, many miles away, and I should think about as high as any mountain in the world. Never shall I forget the utter loneliness of that prospect—only the little far-away homestead giving sign of human handiwork;—the vastness of mountain and plain, or river and sky; the marvelous atmospheric effects—sometimes black mountains against a white sky, and then again, after cold weather, white mountains against a black sky—sometimes seen through breaks and swirls of cloud. . . . I am there now, as I write; I fancy that I can see the downs, the huts, the plain, the river-bed—that torrent pathway of desolation, with its distant roar of waters.

Samuel Butler, Erewhon. *Look at it*

THE GARDENS OF OLD MONACO

Colvin and I are sitting on a seat on the battlemented gardens of old Monaco. The day is grey and clouded, with a little red light on the horizon, and the sea, hundreds of feet below us, is a sort of purple dove-color. Shrub-geraniums, firs, and aloes cover all available shelves and terraces, and where these become impossible, the prickly pear precipitates headlong downwards its

bunches of oval plates; so that the whole face of the cliff is covered with an arrested fall . . . a sort of fall of the evil angels petrified midway on its career. White gulls sail past below us every now and then, sometimes singly, sometimes by twos and threes, and sometimes in a great flight. The sharp perfume of the shrub-geraniums fills the air. . . . The sea is blue, grey, purple, and green; very subdued and peaceful; earlier in the day it was marbled by small, keen specks of sun and larger spaces of faint irradiation; but the clouds have closed together now, and these appearances are no more. Voices of children and occasional crying of gulls; the mechanical noise of a gardener somewhere behind us in the scented thicket; and the faint report and rustle of the waves on the precipice far below, only break in upon the quietness to render it more complete and perfect.

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Copyright, 1913, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

EDINBURGH FROM THE CALTON HILL

Of all places for a view, this Calton Hill is perhaps the best; since you can see the Castle, which you lose from the Castle, and Arthur's Seat which you cannot see from Arthur's Seat. It is the place to stroll on one of those days of sunshine and east wind which are so common in our more than temperate summer. The breeze comes off the sea, with a little of the freshness and that touch of chill, peculiar to the quarter, which is delightful to certain very ruddy organizations, and greatly the reverse to the majority of mankind. . . .

Immediately underneath upon the south, you command the yards of the High School, and the towers and courts of the new Jail. . . . In the one, you may perhaps see

female prisoners taking exercise like a string of nuns; in the other, schoolboys running at play and their shadows keeping step with them. From the bottom of the valley, a gigantic chimney rises almost to the level of the eye, a taller and shapelier edifice than Nelson's Monument. Look a little farther, and there is Holyrood Palace, with its Gothic frontal and ruined abbey, and the red sentry pacing smartly to and fro before the door like a mechanical figure in a panorama. By way of an outpost, you can single out the little peak-roofed lodge, over which Rizzio's murderers made their escape, and where Queen Mary herself, according to gossip, bathed in white wine to entertain her loveliness. Behind and overhead, lie the Queen's Park . . . and thence, by knoll and rocky bulwark and precipitous slope, the eye rises to the top of Arthur's Seat, a hill for magnitude, a mountain in virtue of its bold design. This upon your left. Upon the right, the roofs and spires of the Old Town climb one above another to where the citadel prints its broad bulk and jagged crown of bastions on the western sky.—Perhaps it is now one in the afternoon; and at the same instant of time, a ball rises to the summit of Nelson's flagstaff close at hand, and, far away, a puff of smoke followed by a report bursts from the half-moon battery at the Castle. This is the time-gun by which people set their watches, as far as the sea-coast or in hill farms upon the Pentlands.—To complete the view, the eye enfilades Princes Street, black with traffic, and has a broad look over the valley between the Old Town and the New; here, full of railway trains and stepped over by the high North Bridge upon its many columns, and there, green with trees and gardens. . . .

These are the main features of the scene roughly sketched. How they are all tilted by the inclination of

the ground, how each stands out in delicate relief against the rest, what manifold detail, and play of sun and shadow, animate and accentuate the picture, is a matter for a person on the spot, and turning swiftly on his heels, to grasp and bind together in one comprehensive look. It is the character of such a prospect, to be full of change and of things moving. The multiplicity embarrasses the eye; and the mind, among so much, suffers itself to grow absorbed with single points. You remark a tree in a hedgerow, or follow a cart along a country road. You turn to the city, and see children, dwarfed by distance into pigmies, at play about suburban doorsteps; you have a glimpse upon a thoroughfare where people are densely moving; you note ridge after ridge of chimney-stacks running down-hill one behind another, and church spires rising bravely from the sea of roofs. At one of the innumerable windows, you watch a figure moving; on one of the multitude of roofs, you watch clambering chimney-sweeps. The wind takes a run and scatters the smoke; bells are heard, far and near, faint and loud, to tell the hour; or perhaps a bird goes dipping evenly over the housetops, like a gull across the waves. And here you are in the meantime, on this pastoral hillside, among nibbling sheep and looked upon by monumental buildings.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Edinburgh*. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, the authorized publishers.

CHESTNUT STREET FROM A FIRE-ESCAPE

Just outside our office window is a fire-escape with a little iron balcony. On warm days, when the tall windows are wide open, that rather slender platform is our favorite vantage ground for watching Chestnut street. We have often thought how pleasant it would be to have

a pallet spread out there, so that we could do our work in that reclining posture that is so inspiring.

But we can tell a good deal of what is going on along Chestnut street without leaving our desk. Chestnut street sings a music of its own. Its genial human symphony could never be mistaken for that of any other highway. The various strands of sound that compose its harmony gradually sink into our mind without our paying conscious heed to them. For instance, there is the ^{triple tempo} light sliding swish of the trolley poles along the wire, accompanied by the deep rocking rumble of the car, and the crash as it pounds over the cross-tracks at Sixth street. There is the clear mellow clang of the trolley gongs, the musical trill of fast wagon wheels running along the trolley rails, and the rattle of hoofs on the cobbled strip between the metals. Particularly easy to identify is the sound every citizen knows, the rasping, sliding clatter of a wagon turning off the car track so that a trolley can pass it. The front wheels have left the track, but the back pair are scraping along against the setts before mounting over the rim.

Every street has its own distinctive noises and the attentive ear accustoms itself to them until they become almost a part of the day's enjoyment. The deep-toned bell of Independence Hall bronzing the hours is part of our harmony here, and no less familiar is the vigorous tap-tap of Blind Al's stick. . . . Several times a day he passes along under our windows, and the tinkle of his staff is a well-known and pleasant note in our ears. We like to imagine, too, that we can recognize the peculiarly soft and easy-going rumble of a wagon of watermelons.

But what we started to talk about was the balcony, from which we can get a long view of Chestnut street

all the way from Broad street almost to the river. It is a pleasant prospect. There is something very individual about Chestnut street. It could not possibly be in New York. The solid, placid dignity of most of its buildings, the absence of skyscrapers, the plain stone fronts with the arched windows of the sixties, all these bespeak a city where it is still a little bit bad form for a building to be too garishly new. I may be wrong, but I do not remember in New York any such criss-cross of wires above the streets. Along Chestnut street they run at will from roof to roof over the way.

Gazing from our little balcony the eye travels down along the uneven profile of the northern flank of Chestnut street. From the Wanamaker wireless past the pale, graceful minaret of the Federal Reserve Bank, the skyline drops down to the Federal Building, which, standing back from the street, leaves a gap in the view. Then the slant of roofs draws the eye upwards again, over the cluster of little conical spires on Green's Hotel (like a French château) to the sharp ridges and heavy pyramid roof of the Merchants' Union Trust Company. This, with its two attendant banks on either side, is undoubtedly the most extraordinary architectural curiosity Chestnut street can boast. The façade, with its appalling quirks and twists of stone and iron grillwork, its sculptured Huns and Medusa faces, is something to contemplate with alarm.

After reaching Seventh street, Chestnut becomes less adventurous. Perhaps awed by the simple and stately beauty of Independence Hall and its neighbors, it restrains itself from any further originality until Fourth street, where the ornate Gothic of the Provident claims the eye. From our balcony we can see only a part of

Independence Hall, but we look down on the faded elms along the pavement in front and the long line of iron posts beloved of small boys for leapfrog. Then the eye climbs to the tall and graceful staff above the Drexel Building, where the flag ripples cleanly against the blue. And our view is bounded, far away to the east, by the massive tower of the Victor factory in Camden.

usual
usage
no
element

It is great fun to watch Chestnut street from the little balcony. On hot days, when the white sunlight fills the street with a dazzle of brightness and bands of dark shadow, it is amusing to see how all pedestrians keep to the shady southern pavements. When a driving shower comes up and the slants and rods of rain lash against the dingy brownstone fronts, one may look out and see passers by huddled under the awnings and the mounted policemen's horses sleek as satin in the wet. The pavement under our balcony is notable for its slipperiness: it has been chipped into ribs by stone-masons to make it less so. In the rain it shines like a mirror. And our corner has its excitements, too. Once every few months the gas mains take it into their pipes to explode and toss manholes and paving sixty feet in air.

The part of Chestnut street that is surveyed by our balcony is a delightful highway: friendly, pleasantly dignified, with just a touch of old-fashioned manners and homeliness. It is rather akin to a London street. And best of all, almost underneath our balcony is a little lunch room where you can get custard ice cream with honey poured over it, and we think it is the best thing in the world.

Christopher Morley, *Travels in Philadelphia*.
By permission of the author and David McKay
Company.

PROGRESSIVE

THE PASSING OF THE CARAVANS

The year we write of belonged to a cycle when readers of the Koran and worshippers at Mecca were more numerous than now, if not more zealous and believing. And it was to witness the passing of this procession, so numerous, so motley, so strangely furnished, so uncontrolled except as it pleased, the Prince of India was seated at the door of his tent upon the hill. Long before the spectacle was sighted in the distance, its approach was announced by an overhanging pillar of cloud, not unlike that which went before the Israelites in their exodus through similar wastes. Shortly after the interview with the Emir, the Prince, looking under the pillar, saw a darkening line appear, not more at first than a thread stretched across a section of the east.

The apparition was without a break; nor might he have said it was in motion or of any depth. A sound came from the direction not unlike that of a sibilant wind. Presently out of the perspective, which reduced the many to one and all sizes to a level, the line developed into unequal divisions, with intervals between them; about the same time, the noise became recognizable as the voices fiercely strained and inarticulate of an innumerable host of men. Then the divisions broke into groups, some larger than others; a little later individuals became discernible; finally what had appeared a line resolved itself into a convulsing mass, without front, without wings, but of a depth immeasurable.

The pilgrims did not attempt to keep the road; having converted their march into a race, they spread right and left over the country, each seeking a near way; sometimes the object was attained, sometimes not; the end

was a confusion beyond description. The very inequalities of the ground helped the confusion. A group was one moment visible on a height; then it vanished in a hollow. Now there were thousands on a level; then, as if sinking, they went down, down, and presently where they were, there was only dust or a single individual.

Afterwhile, so wide was the inrolling tide, the field of vision overflowed, and the eye was driven to ranging from point to point, object to object. Then it was discernible that the mass was mixed of animals and men—here horses, there camels—some with riders, some without—all, the burdened as well as the unburdened, straining forward under urgency of shriek and stick—forward for life—forward as if of the two “comforts” Success beckoned them in front, and Despair behind plied them with spears.

At length the eastern boundary of the Valley was reached. There one would suppose the foremost of the racers, the happy victors, would rest, or, at their leisure, take of the many sites those they preferred; but no—the penalty attaching to the triumph was the danger of being run down by the thousands behind. In going on there was safety—and on they went.

To this time the spectacle had been a kind of panoramic generality; now the details came into view, and accustomed as he was to the marvels of pageantry, the Prince exclaimed: “These are not men, but devils fleeing from the wrath of God!” and involuntarily he went nearer, down to the brink of the height. It seemed the land was being inundated with camels; not the patient brutes we are used to thinking of by that name, with which domestication means ill-treatment and suffering—the slow-going burden-bearers, always appealing to our sympathy because always apparently tired, hungry, sleepy, worn-out,

always reeling on as if looking for quiet places in which to slip their loads of whatever kind, and lie down and die; but the camel aroused, enraged, frightened, panic-struck, rebellious, sending forth strange cries, and running with all its might—an army of camels hurling their gigantic hulks along at a rate little less than blind impetus. And they went, singly and in strings, and yonder a mass. The slower, and those turned to the right or left of the direct course, and all such as had hesitated upon coming to a descent, were speedily distanced or lost to sight; so the ensemble was constantly shifting. And then the rolling and tossing of the cargoes and packages on the backs of the animals, and the streaming out of curtains, scarfs, shawls and loose draperies of every shape and color, lent touches of drollery and bright contrasts to the scene. One instant the spectator on the hill was disposed to laugh, then to admire, then to shiver at the immensity of a danger; over and over again amidst his quick variation of feeling, he repeated the exclamation: "These are not men, but devils fleeing from the wrath of God!"

Lew Wallace, *The Prince of India*. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

ON A BUS TOP

Often I ride on a bus top like a maharajah on an elephant, up near the tusks, as it were, where the view is unbroken. I plan this trip so that I move counter to the procession that goes uptown in the late afternoon. Is there a scene like it in the world? The boulevards of Paris in times of peace are hardly so gay. Fifth Avenue is blocked with motor cars. Fashion has gone forth to select a feather. A ringlet has gone awry and must be mended. The Pomeranian's health is served by sun-

light. The Spitz must have an airing. Fashion has wagged its head upon a Chinese vase—has indeed squinted at it through a lorgnette against a fleck—and now lolls home to dinner. Or style has veered an inch, and it has been a day of fitting. At restaurant windows one may see the feeding of the overfed. Men sit in club windows and still wear their silk hats as though there was no glass between them and the windy world. Footmen in boots and breeches sit as stiffly as though they were toys grown large and had metal spikes below to hold them to their boxes. They look like the iron firemen that ride on nursery fire-engines. For all these sights the bus top is the best place.

And although we sit on a modest roof, the shop-keepers cater to us. For in many of the stores, is there not an upper tier of windows for our use? The commodities of this second story are quite as fine as those below. And waxen beauties who display the frocks greet us in true democracy with as sweet a simper.

Charles S. Brooks, *There's Pippins and Cheese To Come*. By permission of Yale University Press.

AN HAWAIIAN RANCH

It would surprise you if you came out to-night from Honolulu (all shining with electric lights, and all in a bustle from the arrival of the mail, which is to carry you these lines) and crossed the long wooden causeway along the beach, and came out on the road through Kapiolani park, and seeing a gate in the palings, with a tub of gold-fish by the wayside, entered casually in. The buildings stand in three groups by the edge of the beach, where an angry little spitfire sea continually spirts and thrashes with impotent irascibility, the big sea breaking further

out upon the reef. The first is a small house, with a very large summer parlour, or *lanai*, as they call it here, roofed, but practically open. There you will find the lamps burning and the family sitting about the table, dinner just done: my mother, my wife, Lloyd, Belle, my wife's daughter, Austin her child, and to-night (by way of rarity) a guest. All about the walls our South Sea curiosities, war clubs, idols, pearl shells, stone axes, etc.; and the walls are only a small part of a *lanai*, the rest being glazed or latticed windows, or mere open space. You will see there no sign of the Squire, however; and being a person of a humane disposition, you will only glance in over the balcony railing at the merry-makers in the summer parlour, and proceed further afield after the Exile. You look round, there is beautiful green turf, many trees of an outlandish sort that drop thorns—look out, if your feet are bare; but I beg your pardon, you have not been long enough in the South Seas—and many oleanders in full flower. The next group of buildings is ramshackle, and quite dark; you make out a coach-house door, and look in—only some cocoanuts; you try round to the left and come to the sea front, where Venus and the moon are making luminous tracks on the water, and a great swell rolls and shines on the outer reef; and here is another door—all these places open from the outside—and you go in, and find photography, tubs of water, negatives steeping, a tap, and a chair and an ink-bottle, where my wife is supposed to write; round a little further, a third door, entering which you find a picture upon an easel and a table sticky with paints; a fourth door admits you to a sort of court, where there is a hen sitting—I believe on a fallacious egg. No sign of the Squire in all this. But right opposite the studio door you have observed a third little house from whose open door lamp-

light streams out and makes hay of the strong moonlight shadows. You had supposed it made no part of the grounds, for a fence runs round it lined with oleander; but as the Squire is nowhere else, is it not just possible he may be here? It is a grim, little wooden shanty; cobwebs bedeck it; friendly mice inhabit its recesses; the mailed cockroach walks upon the wall; so also, I regret to say, the scorpion. Herein are two pallet beds, two mosquito curtains, strung to the pitchboards of the roof, two tables laden with books and manuscripts, three chairs, and, in one of the beds, the Squire busy writing to yourself, as it chances, and just at this moment somewhat bitten by mosquitoes. He has just set fire to the insect powder, and will be all right in no time; but just now he contemplates large white blisters, and would like to scratch them, but knows better.

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Copyright, 1913, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

THE ROCK OF TANJORE

A swarming as of an ant-heap, and the constant set of people in one direction suffices to guide me, even on the evening before the festival, towards the rock temple that dominates the town. It is made of three or four monstrous blocks that are without a crack and almost without a wrinkle; these stones have merely been thrown one on the other, and the sides, rounded like the flanks of animals and polished by running rain-water, hang over in a fearful manner. A veritable crowd of cawing crows whirls incessantly round the summit. A monumental stairway plunges into the dim recesses of the rock, between high granite columns of laboured design, and past thousands of idols which have been rendered almost

shapeless by age. Some young elephants, that are sacred and descended from sacred parents, are standing by, nearly blocking up the entry; they are covered with little bells, threaded in the same way as the garlands, and, as I pass, these elephants caress me with their trunks in babyish glee.

I commence to ascend the stairs, which almost suddenly plunge into darkness; now religious music, whose volume is increasing by the sonority of the grotto, fills the air, seeming to issue from the bowels of the earth.

I need not say that the gallery is filled with a number of superposed temples, galleries, passages, and stairways; some penetrating into mysterious darkness are interdicted to all but the priests. There are statues in every angle and corner; some are colossal, whilst others are as tiny as gnomes, but all have crumbled with age and have only stumps instead of arms, and their faces are no longer recognizable. As I am not one of the faithful, I must keep to the great central gallery that is open to everybody, and which ascends between splendid columns hewn out of solid blocks. These columns are covered by figures and designs, but the bases, as far up as the height of a man, have lost all shape under the constant polishing which has continued for countless centuries by the nude figures who have pressed against them in these narrow passages. Formerly the walls, and even the pavements and steps, were covered with signs and inscriptions, but age and the rubbing of countless hands and naked feet have rendered them indistinguishable.

First we enter some low and stifling rooms, from which a sound of chanting issues out of the gloom, then higher up we come to a temple, as large as a cathedral, whose ponderous roof is upheld by a forest of columns. The profane are allowed to enter on condition that they do

not advance too far; so it is impossible to see where the temple finishes, and there are passages and sculptured grottos which disappear into the blackness of the rock. In a corner, near a hole through which light comes, some Brahmin children are engaged in the study of the holy books under the tutelage of an old man who is entirely covered with white hair. From the roof prodigious properties belonging the Brahmin procession are suspended—men, cars, horses, and elephants, all larger than their natural size, strange forms, carefully made from cardboard and painted, or tinselled paper stretched over a thin framework of bamboo.

Tribes of little birds, swallows or sparrows, in that anxiety of reproduction which characterizes the life of this land, have found time between two religious processions to fill these fantastic carcasses with their nests; so the confused forms of the suspended monsters are gay with the fluttering of wings and musical with the chirping of the young birds whose song falls like light hail on the ground below.

We have to mount higher yet. These polished walls, which are often of a single block, and the semi-darkness remind one of a catacomb; but a flood of sunlight suddenly pierces through a hole cut in the rock, and we see the pagodas and palm trees stretched far beneath us. These are also some stones which have been brought here as large as those of the early stone age; these have been thrown, pell-mell and unjointed, one on top of the other, but their huge weight keeps them in position, and time can never shift them from their place.

At every step we encounter Brahmins of superb form and appearance whose chests are daubed with ashes in honor of Siva, the god of death. They hurriedly ascend and descend, busied with the arrangements for to-

morrow's festival, disappearing into the passages that are forbidden to me, and bringing out copper vases filled with water or bearing garlands to the gods I may not see.

There is yet another temple. I may not enter it, but only look in from the threshold. It is built over the one I have just left, but is much larger and more magnificent, and much lighter too, for there are many square openings in the roof through which the blue sky can be seen, through which the sunlight falls on the ædicules sheathed in their many-coloured and gilt ornaments.

Above this last sanctuary are the terraces from which the plains of Tanjore may be seen extending as far as the eye can see, dotted with thousands of other temples that emerge from the green palms.

At last we reach the stone which forms the summit, a single block which the original volcanic disturbance has placed here somewhat unsteadily. This is the stone which looks like the prow of a ship or the crest of a helmet when it is seen from below. The sun is shining on its smooth sides as we ascend by one hundred and forty faintly traced steps, so narrow, worn, and sloping that we cannot escape a feeling of giddiness.

It is on these final terraces, adorned with golden cupolas, that the sacred fire is nightly lit. Here also, in a dark and heavy kiosk, surrounded by iron bars like a wild beasts' den, the supreme idol is found; their god, the horrible black Ganesa, is the wild beast, and until one approaches quite close to the bars, his crouching form cannot be discerned. His elephant's ears and trunk fall over the protruding belly, and the stone body is half-clothed in gray, dirty, torn rags. Here the captive god, whose expression is fierce and cunning, reigns alone and supreme in the airy temple built above all the rest of temples, from which an uninterrupted stream of music

and prayer has poured forth for the last two thousand years.

We stand far above the region of human habitation, and almost above the zone which the birds inhabit. Below us we see the whirling flights of crows and the eagles whose wings are stretched out motionlessly in the air. The country that we overlook is one where religion holds its extremest sway; temples are scattered everywhere, almost as abundantly as trees, and the red harvest of sacred pyramids emerges on all sides above the verdure. So plentifully do the sacred towers rise above the palms that from the height at which we are situated they resemble mole-hills in a field of grass. Those twenty-four monstrous towers down there, grouped like the tents of an encampment, belong to the temple of Chri Ragam, the largest of the sanctuaries of Vishnu. . . .

The town is situated at the base of the overhanging rock, and the complicated network of streets, the profusion of many-coloured temples, and the mosques, that are so white as to look bluish, are marked out as on a highly coloured map; the holy ponds, which seem to swarm with black flies, shine like mirrors in the sun; these are no flies, however, but Brahmins at their morning ablutions.

As at Malabar, the great coco-palms nearly cover the whole of the country, but in the midst of this forest of waving plumes, which extends on all sides of the horizon, there are some occasional gaps; large yellow patches where the grass has been burnt up by the increasing dryness, which has caused a famine in the north-west provinces, and which is already causing anxiety to the people of Tanjore.

All the sounds of the animated and seething life below mingle as they rise up to us; the noise of the joyful town,

the rumbling of the zebu carts, the tom-toms and bagpipes of the streets, the croakings of the eternal crows, the screams of eagles, the psalms from the many temples beneath our feet, and the brayings of the sacred horns that never cease to echo round the sides of the rock on which we stand.

Pierri Loti, *India*. Translated by George A. F. Inman. By permission of T. Werner Laurie, Ltd.

FROM MILWAUKEE TO THE MISSISSIPPI

The ride from Milwaukee to the Mississippi is a fine ride at any time, superb in summer. To lean back in a reclining-chair and whirl away in a breezy July day, past lakes, groves of oak, past fields of barley being reaped, past hay-fields, where the heavy grass is toppling before the swift sickle, is a panorama of delight, a road full of delicious surprises, where down a sudden vista lakes open, or a distant wooded hill looms darkly blue, or swift streams, foaming deep down the solid rock, sends whiffs of cool breezes in at the window.

It has majesty, breadth. The farming has nothing apparently petty about it. All seems vigorous, youthful, and prosperous. Mr. Howard McLane in his chair let his newspaper fall on his lap, and gazed out upon it with dreaming eyes. It had a certain mysterious glamour to him; the lakes were cooler and brighter to his eye, the greens fresher, and the grain more golden than to any one else, for he was coming back to it all after an absence of ten years. It was, besides, *his* West. He still took pride in being a Western man.

His mind flew all day ahead of the train to the little town, far on toward the Mississippi, where he had spent his boyhood and youth. As the train passed the Wis-

consin River, with its curiously carved cliffs, its cold, dark, swift-swirling water eating slowly under cedar-clothed banks, Howard began to feel curious little movements of the heart, like those of a lover nearing his sweetheart.

The hills changed in character, growing more intimately recognizable. They rose higher as the train left the ridge and passed down into the Black River Valley, and specifically into the La Crosse valley. They ceased to have any hint of upheavals of rock, and became simply parts of the ancient level left standing after the water had practically given up its post-glacial scooping action.

It was about six o'clock as he caught sight of the splendid broken line of hills on which his baby eyes had looked thirty-five years ago. A few minutes later, and the train drew up at the grimy little station set into the hillside, and, giving him just time to leap off, plunged on again toward the West. Howard felt a ridiculous weakness in his legs as he stepped out upon the broiling hot, splintery planks of the station and faced the few idlers lounging about. He simply stood and gazed with the same intensity and absorption one of the idlers might show standing before the Brooklyn Bridge.

The town caught and held his eyes first. How poor and dull and sleepy and squalid it seemed! The one main street ended at the hillside at his left, and stretched away to the north, between two rows of the usual village stores, unrelieved by a tree or a touch of beauty. An unpaved street, with walled, drab-colored, miserable, rotting wooden buildings, with the inevitable battlements; the same—only worse and more squalid—was the town.

The same, only more beautiful still, was the majestic amphitheatre of green wooded hills that circled the

horizon, and toward which he lifted his eyes. He thrilled at the sight.

"Glorious!" he said involuntarily.

Accustomed to the White Mountains, to the Alleghanies, he had wondered if these hills would retain their old-time charm. They did. He took off his hat to them as he stood there. Richly wooded, with gently sloping green sides, rising to massive square or rounded tops with dim vistas, they glowed down upon the squat little town, gracious, lofty in their greeting, immortal in their vivid and delicate beauty.

Hamlin Garland, "Up the Coolly" in *Main Travelled Roads*. By permission of Mr. Garland.

ON THE WAY TO BALTIMORE

The other day we had occasion to take a B. and O. train down to Baltimore. We had to hurry to catch the vehicle at that quaint abandoned chateau at Twenty-Fourth and Chestnut, and when we settled down in the smoker, we realized that we had embarked with no reading matter but a newspaper we had already read. We thought, with considerable irritation, that we were going to be bored.

We were never less bored in our life than during that two-hour ride. In the first place, the line of march of the B. and O. gives one quite a different view of the country from the course of the P. R. R., with which we are better acquainted. From the Pennsy, for instance, Wilmington appears as a smoky, shackish, and not too comely city. In the eye of the genteel B. and O. it is a quiet suburb, with passive shady lawns about a modest station where a little old lady with a basket of eggs and black-finger gloves got gingerly on board. There were

a number of colored doughboys in the car, just landed in New York, and on their way to their southern homes. "Oh, boy!" cried one of these as we left Wilmington, "de nex' stop's Baltimuh, an' dat's wheeah mah native home at." Every ten minutes a fawn-tinted minion from some rearward dining car came through with a tray of ice-cream cones, and these childlike and amiable darkies cleaned out his stock every time. They had all evidently just bought new and very narrow-toed cordovan shoes in New York; there was hardly one who did not have his footgear off to nurse his tortured members. . . .

It was a gray and green day, quite cool—for it was still early forenoon—and we looked out on vanishing woodlands and bosky valleys with a delight too eager to express. Why (we thought) should any sane being waste his energy bedeviling the Senate when all a lifetime spent in attempting to describe the beauty of earth—surely an innocent ambition—would be insufficient? Statesmen, we thought, are but children of a smaller growth; and with a superbly evacuated mind we gazed upon the meadows and dancing streams near Leslie, just over the Maryland border. There were glimpses of that most alluring vista known to man: a strip of woodland thin enough to let through a twinkle of light from the other side. What a mystery there is about the edge of a wood, as you push through and wonder just what you may be coming to. In that corner of Cecil county there are many Forest of Arden glimpses, where the brown and velvety cows grazing in thickets seem (as the train flies by) almost like venison. There are swelling meadows against the sky, white with daisies and Queen Anne's lace; the lichened gray fences, horses straining at the harrow and white farmhouses sitting back among the domes of trees.

Then comes the glorious Susquehanna—that noble river that caught the fancy of R. L. S., you remember. He once began a poem with the refrain, “Beside the Susquehanna and along the Delaware.” Olive-green below the high railway bridge, the water tints off to silver in the pale summer haze toward Port Deposit. The B. and O. bridge strides over an island in midstream, and looking down on the tops of the (probably) maples, they are a bright yellow with some blossom-business of their own. A lonely fisherman was squatting in a gray and weathered skiff near the bridge. What a river to go exploring along!

It is quaint that men, who love to live in damp and viewless hollows, always select the jovial and healthy spots to bury themselves in. Just beyond the Susquehanna, on the south side of the track, we pass a little graveyard in quite the most charming spot thereabouts, high on a hill over looking the wide sweep of the river. And then again the green rolling ridges of Hartford county, with yellow dirt roads luring one afoot, and the little brooks scuttling down toward Chesapeake through coverts of fern and brambles. We remembered the lovely verse of the Canadian poet, Charles G. D. Roberts:

Comes the lure of green things growing,
Comes the call of waters flowing—
And the wayfarer desire
Moves and wakes and would be going.

What a naughtiness of pagan temptation sings to one across that bewitching country; what illicit thoughts of rolltop desks consumed in the bonfire, of the warm dust soft under the bootsoles, and the bending road that dips into the wood among an ambush of pink magnolias. If the train were to halt at one of those little stations—say Joppa, near the Gunpowder river—there might be one

less newspaper man in the world. I can see him, dropping off the train, lighting his pipe in the windless shelter of a pile of weather-beaten ties, and setting forth up the Gunpowder valley to discover the romantic hamlets of Madonna and Trump, lost in that green paradise of Maryland June. Or the little town of Loreley, on the other side of the stream! Think of the fireflies and the honeysuckle on a June evening in the village of Madonna! Ah, well, of what avail to imagine these things! The train, unluckily, does not stop.

And Baltimore itself, with its unique and leisurely charm, its marvelously individual atmosphere of well-being and assured loveliness and old serenity, how little it realizes how enchanting it is! Baltimore ought to pay a special luxury tax for the dark-eyed and almost insolent beauty of its girls, who gaze at one with the serene candor of unquestioned divinity. But that is a topic that belongs to Baltimore chroniclers, and we may not trespass on their privileges.

At any rate, we got our fishing rod, which is what we went for.

Christopher Morley, *Travels in Philadelphia*.
By permission of the author and David McKay
Company.

FROM NEW ORLEANS TO THE ISLANDS

Travelling south from New Orleans to the Islands, you pass through a strange land into a strange sea, by various winding waterways. You can journey to the Gulf by lugger if you please; but the trip may be made much more rapidly and agreeably on some one of those light narrow steamers, built especially for bayou-travel, which usually receive passengers at a point not far from the

foot of old Saint-Louis Street, hard by the sugar-landing, where there is ever a pushing and flocking of steam-craft—all striving for place to rest their white breasts against the levée, side by side,—like great weary swans. But the miniature steamboat on which you engage passage to the Gulf never lingers long in the Mississippi: she crosses the river, slips into some canal-mouth, labors along the artificial channel awhile, and then leaves it with a scream of joy, to puff her free way down many a league of heavily shadowed bayou. Perhaps thereafter she may bear you through the immense silence of drenched rice-fields, where the yellow-green level is broken at long intervals by the black silhouette of some irrigating machine;—but whichever of the five different routes be pursued, you will find yourself more than once floating through sombre mazes of swamp-forest,—past assemblages of cypresses all hoary with the parasitic tillandsia, and grotesque as gatherings of fetich-gods. Ever from river or from lakelet the steamer glides again into canal or bayou,—from bayou or canal once more into lake or bay; and sometimes the swamp-forest visibly thins away from these shores into wastes of reedy morass where, even of breathless nights, the quaggy soil trembles to a sound like thunder of breakers on a coast: the storm-roar of billions of reptile voices chanting in cadence,—rhythmically surging in stupendous *crescendo* and *diminuendo*,—a monstrous and appalling chorus of frogs! . . .

Panting, screaming, scraping her bottom over the sand-bars,—all day the little steamer strives to reach the grand blaze of blue open water below the marsh-lands; and perhaps she may be fortunate enough to enter the Gulf about the time of sunset. For the sake of passengers, she travels by day only; but there are other vessels which

make the journey also by night—threading the bayou-labyrinths winter and summer: sometimes steering by the North Star,—sometimes feeling the way with poles in the white season of fogs,—sometimes, again, steering by that Star of Evening which in our sky glows like another moon, and drops over the silent lakes as she passes a quivering trail of silver fire.

Shadows lengthen; and at last the woods dwindle away behind you into thin bluish lines;—land and water alike take more luminous color;—bayous open into broad passes;—lakes link themselves with sea-bays;—and the ocean-wind bursts upon you,—keen, cool, and full of light. For the first time the vessel begins to swing,—rocking to the great living pulse of the tides. And gazing from the deck around you, with no forest walls to break the view, it will seem to you that the low land must have once been rent asunder by the sea, and strewn about the Gulf in fantastic tatters. . . .

Beyond the sea-marshes a curious archipelago lies. If you travel by steamer to the sea-islands to-day, you are tolerably certain to enter the Gulf by Grande Pass—skirting Grande Terre, the most familiar island of all, not so much because of its proximity as because of its great crumbling fort and its graceful pharos: the stationary White-Light of Barataria. Otherwise the place is bleakly uninteresting: a wilderness of wind-swept grasses and sinewy weeds waving away from a thin beach ever speckled with drift and decaying things,—worn-riddled timbers, dead porpoises. Eastward the russet level is broken by the columnar silhouette of the light-house, and again, beyond it, by some puny scrub timber, above which rises the angular ruddy mass of the old brick fort, whose ditches swarm with crabs, and whose sluiceways are half choked by obsolete cannon-shot, now thickly covered with

incrustation of oyster shells. . . . Around all the gray circling of a shark-haunted sea. . . .

Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1889.
By permission of the publishers.

THE FISH REPORTER

Finest of all, as reporter, to go where the fish reporter goes. There the sight-seeing cars never find their way; the hurried commuter has not his path, nor knows of these things at all; and there that racy character, who, voicing a multitude, declares he would rather be a lamp post on Broadway than Mayor of St. Louis, goes not for to see. Up lower Greenwich Street the fish reporter goes, along an eerie, dark, and narrow way, beneath a strange, thundering roof, the "L" overhead. He threads his way amid seemingly chaotic, architectural piles of boxes, of barrels, crates, casks, kegs, and bulging bags; roundabout many great fetlocked draught horses, frequently standing or plunging upon the sidewalks, and attached to many huge trucks and wagons; and much of the time in the street he is compelled to go, finding the sidewalks too congested with the traffic of commerce to admit of his passing there.

You probably eat butter, and eggs, and cheese. Then you would delight in Greenwich Street. You could feast your highly creditable appetite for these excellent things for very nearly a solid mile upon the signs of "wholesale dealers and commission merchants" in them. The letter press, as you might say, of the fish reporter's walk is a noble pæan to the earth's glorious yield for the joyous sustenance of man. For these princely merchants' signs sing of opulent stores of olive oil, of sausages, beans, soups, extracts, and spices, sugar, Spanish, Bermuda, and Havana onions, "fine" apples, teas, coffee, rice, chocolates,

dried fruits and raisins, and of loaves and of fishes, and of "fish products." Lo! dark and dirty and thundering Greenwich Street is to-day's translation of the Garden of Eden.

Here is a great house whose sole vocation is the importation of caviar for barter here. . . . The fish reporter is told, however, if it be summer, that there cannot be much doing in the way of caviar until fall, "when the spoonbill start coming in." And on he goes to a great saltfish house, where many men in salt-stained garments are running about, their arms laden with large flat objects, of sharp and jagged edge, which resemble dried and crackling hides of some animal curiously like a huge fish; and numerous others of "the same" are trundling round wheelbarrow-like trucks likewise so laden. Where stacks of these hides stand on their tails against the walls, and goodness knows how many big boxes are, containing, as those open show, beautifully soft, thick, cream-colored slabs, which is fish. And where still other men, in overalls stained like a painter's palette, are knocking off the heads of casks and dipping out of brine still other kinds of fish for inspection. . . .

. . . So, by stages, on up to turn into North Moore Street, looking down a narrow lane between two long bristling rows of wagons pointed out from the curbs, to the façades of the North River docks at the bottom, with the tops of the buff funnels of ocean liners, and Whistlerian silhouettes of derricks, rising beyond. Hereabouts are more importers, exporters, and "producers" of fish, famous in their calling beyond the celebrities of popular publicity. And he that has official entrée may learn, by mounting dusky stairs, half-ladder and half-stair, and by passing through low-ceilinged chambers

freighted with many barrels, to the sanctums of the fish lords, what's doing in the foreign herring way. . . .

Then roundabout, with a step into the broad vista of homely Washington Street, and a turn through Franklin Street, where is the man decorated by the Imperial Japanese Government with a gold medal, if he should care to wear it, for having distinguished himself in the development of commerce in the marine products of Japan, back to Hudson Street. An authentic railroad is one of the spectacular features of Hudson Street.

Here down the middle of the way are endless trains, stopping, starting, crashing, laden to their ears with freight, doubtless all to eat. Tourists should come from very far to view Hudson Street. Here is a spectacle as fascinating, as awe-inspiring, as extraordinary, as any in the world. From dawn until darkness falls, hour after hour, along Hudson Street slowly, steadily moves a mighty procession of great trucks. One would not suppose there were so many trucks on the face of the earth. It is a glorious sight, and any man whose soul is not dead should jump with joy to see it. And the thunder of them altogether as they bang over the stones is like the music of the spheres. . . .

And so the fish reporter enters upon the last lap of his rounds. Through, perhaps, the narrow, crooked lane of Pine Street he passes, to come out at length upon a scene set for a sea tale. Here would a lad, heir to vast estates in Virginia, be kidnapped and smuggled aboard to be sold a slave in Africa. This is Front Street. A white ship lies at the foot of it. Cranes rise at her side. Tugs, belching smoke, bob beyond. All about are ancient warehouses, redolent of the Thames, with steep roofs, and sometimes stairs outside, and with tall shutters, a crescent-

shaped hole in each. There is a dealer in weather-vanes. Other things dealt in hereabouts are these: chronometers, "nautical instruments," wax gums, cordage and twine, marine paints, cotton wool and waste, turpentine, oils, greases, and rosin. Queer old taverns, public houses, are here, too. Why do not their windows rattle with a "Yo, ho, ho?"

There is an old, old house whose business has been fish oil within the memory of men. And here is another. Next, through Water Street, one comes in search of the last word on salt fish. Now the air is filled with gorgeous smell of roasting coffee. Tea, coffee, sugar, rice, spices, bags, and bagging here have their home. And there are haughty bonded warehouses filled with fine liquors. From his white cabin at the top of a venerable structure comes the dean of the saltfish business. "Export trade fair," he says; "good demand from South America."

From *Walking Stick Papers* by Robert Cortes Holliday, George H. Doran Company, Publishers. By permission of the publishers.

COMPARATIVE

WATERLOO

Those who wish to form a distinct idea of the battle of Waterloo need only imagine a capital A laid on the ground. The left leg of the A is the Nivelles road, the right one the Genappe road, while the string of the A is the broken way running from Ohain to Braine l'Alleud. The top of the A is Mont St. Jean, where Wellington is; the left lower point is Hougomont, where Reille is with Jérôme Bonaparte; the right lower point is La Belle Alliance, where Napoleon is. A little below the point

where the string of the A meets and cuts the right leg, is La Haye Sainte; and in the centre of this string is the exact spot where the battle was concluded. It is here that the lion is placed, the involuntary symbol of the heroism of the Old Guard.

The triangle comprised at the top of the A between the two legs and the string is the plateau of Mont St. Jean; the dispute for this plateau was the whole battle. The wings of the two armies extend to the right and left of the Genappe and Nivelles road, d'Erlon facing Picton, Reille facing Hill. Behind the point of the A, behind the plateau of St. Jean, is the forest of Soignies. As for the plan itself, imagine a vast undulating ground; each ascent commands the next ascent, and all the undulations ascend to Mont St. Jean, ending there in the forest.

Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables*. By permission
of the publishers, Little, Brown, & Company.

CAPE COD ✓

Cape Cod is the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts; the shoulder is at Buzzard's Bay; the elbow, or crazy-bone, at Cape Mallebarre; the wrist at Truro; and the sandy fist at Provincetown,—behind which the State stands on her guard, with her back to the Green Mountains, and her feet planted on the floor of the ocean, like an athlete protecting her Bay,—boxing with north-east storms, and, ever and anon, heaving up her Atlantic adversary from the lap of earth,—ready to thrust forward her other fist, which keeps guard the while upon her breast at Cape Ann. . . .

The Cape extends from Sandwich eastward thirty-five miles, and thence north and northwest thirty more, in all sixty-five, and has an average breadth of about five

miles. In the interior it rises to the height of two hundred, and sometimes perhaps three hundred feet above the level of the sea. According to Hitchcock, the geologist of the State, it is composed almost entirely of sand, even to the depth of three hundred feet in some places, though there is probably a concealed core of rock a little beneath the surface, and it is of diluvian origin, excepting a small portion at the extremity and elsewhere along the shores, which is alluvial. For the first half of the Cape large blocks of stone are found, here and there, mixed with the sand, but for the last thirty miles boulders, or even gravel, are rarely met with. Hitchcock conjectures that the ocean has, in course of time, eaten out Boston Harbor and other bays in the mainland, and that the minute fragments have been deposited by the currents at a distance from the shore, and formed this sand-bank. Above the sand, if the surface is subjected to agricultural tests, there is found to be a thin layer of soil gradually diminishing from Barnstable to Truro, where it ceases; but there are many holes and rents in this weatherbeaten garment not likely to be stitched in time, which reveals the naked flesh of the Cape, and its extremity is completely bare.

Henry David Thoreau, *Cape Cod*. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

THE ENGLISH LAKES

I know not how to give the reader a distinct image of this more readily than by requesting him to place himself in imagination, upon some given point; let it be the top of either of the mountains of Great Gavel or Scawfell; or, rather, let him suppose his situation to be a cloud hanging midway between the two mountains, at not more

than half a mile's distance from the summit of each, and but a few yards above their highest elevation; he will then see stretched at his feet a number of valleys, not fewer than nine, diverging from the point on which he is supposed to stand, like spokes from the nave of a wheel. First he will note, lying to the southeast, the vale of Langdale, which will conduct his eye to the long lake of Winandermere, stretching, as appears, nearly to the sea, or rather to the sands of the vast Bay of Morecamb, which here serves for the rim of this imaginary wheel;—trace it in a direction from the southeast towards the south, and he will next fix his eyes upon the vale of Coniston running up likewise from the sea, but not (as all the other valleys do) to the station which I have considered as the nave of the wheel; and therefore it may not be inaptly represented as a broken spoke sticking in the rim. Looking forth again, with an inclination towards the west, immediately at our feet lies the Vale of Duddon, in which is no lake, but a copious river, winding among fields, rocks, and mountains, and terminating its course in the Sands of Duddon. The fourth valley, which we shall next observe, viz. that of Eskdale, is of the same general character as the last, yet beautifully discriminated from it by peculiar features, which will hereafter be described. Next, almost due west, look down upon and into the deep valley of Wastdale, with its little chapel and half a dozen neat scattered dwellings, a plain of meadow and corn-ground intersected with stone walls, apparently innumerable, like a large piece of lawless patchwork, or an array of mathematical figures, such as in the ancient schools of geometry might have been sportively and fantastically traced out upon sand. Beyond this little fertile plain lies, within its bed of steep mountains, the long, narrow, stern, and desolate lake of Wastdale; and,

beyond this, a dusky tract of level ground conducts the eye to the Irish Sea. The several vales of Ennerdale, Buttermere, with their Lakes, next present themselves, and lastly the Vale of Borrodale, of which that of Keswick is only a continuation, stretching due north, brings us to a point nearly opposite to the Vale of Winandermere with which we began. From this it will appear that the image of a wheel, which I have made use of, is not much more than half complete; but the deficiency on the eastern side may be supplied by the vales of Wytheburn, Uls-water, Hawswater, and the Vale of Grasmere and Rydale; none of these, however, run up to the central point between Great Gavel and Scawfell. From this, hitherto our central point, take a flight of not more than three or four miles eastward to the ridge of Helvellyn and you will look down upon Wytheburn and St. John's Vale, which are a branch of the Vale of Keswick; upon Uls-water, stretching due east; and not far beyond to the southeast (though from this point not visible) lie the Vale and the Lake of Hawswater; and lastly, the winding Vale of Grasmere, Rydale, and Ambleside, brings you back to Winandermere, thus completing, though on the eastern side in an irregular manner, the representative figure of the wheel.

William Wordsworth, *Introduction to Select Views of Cumberland, etc.*, by the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson.

IN FRONT OF THE ROYAL EXCHANGE ✓

There is a place in front of the Royal Exchange where the wide pavement reaches out like a promontory. It is in the shape of a triangle with a rounded apex. A stream

of traffic runs on either side, and other streets send their current down into the open space before it. Like the spokes of a wheel, converging streams of human life flow into this agitated pool. Horses and carriages, carts, vans, omnibuses, cabs, every kind of conveyance, cross each other's course in every possible direction. Twisting in and out by the wheels and under the horses' heads, working a devious way, men and women of all conditions wind a path over. They fill the interstices between the carriages and blacken the surface, till the vans almost float on human beings. Now the streams slacken, and now they rush amain, but never cease; dark waves are always rolling down the incline opposite, waves swell out from the side rivers, all London converges into this focus. There is an indistinguishable noise—it is not clatter, hum, or roar, it is not resolvable; made up of a thousand thousand footsteps, from a thousand hoofs, a thousand wheels—of haste, and shuffle, and quick movements, and ponderous loads; no attention can resolve it into a fixed sound.

Blue carts and yellow omnibuses, varnished carriages and brown vans, green omnibuses and cabs, pale loads of yellow straw, rusty-red iron clanking on paintless carts, high white woolpacks, gray horses, bay horses, black teams; sunlight sparkling on brass harness, gleaming from carriage panels; jingle, jingle, jingle! An intermixed and intertangled, ceaselessly changing jingle, too, of color; flecks of color champed, as it were, like bits in the horses' teeth, frothed and strewn about, and a surface always of dark-dressed people winding like the curves on fast-flowing water. This is the vortex and whirlpool, the centre of human life to-day on the earth. Now the tide rises and now it sinks, but the flow of these rivers always

*Good
Love*

continues. Here it seethes and whirls, not for an hour only, but for all present time, hour by hour, day by day, year by year.

Here it rushes and pushes, the atoms triturate and grind, and, eagerly thrusting by, pursue their separate ends. Here it appears in its unconcealed personality, indifferent to all else but itself, absorbed and rapt in eager self, devoid and stripped of conventional gloss and politeness, yielding only to get its own way; driving, pushing, carried on in a stress of feverish force like a bullet, dynamic force apart from reason or will, like the force that lifts the tides and sends the clouds onwards. The friction of a thousand interests evolves a condition of electricity in which men are moved to and fro without considering their steps. Yet the agitated pool of life is stonily indifferent, the thought is absent or preoccupied, for it is evident that the mass are unconscious of the scene in which they act.

But it is more sternly real than the very stones, for all these men and women that pass through are driven by the push of accumulated circumstances; they cannot stay, they must go, their necks are in the slave's ring, they are beaten like seaweed against the solid walls of fact. In ancient times, Xerxes, the king of kings, looking down upon his myriads, wept to think that in a hundred years not one of them would be left. Where will be these millions of to-day in a hundred years? But, further than that, let us ask, Where will then be the sum and outcome of their labor? If they wither away like summer grass, will not at least a result be left which those of a hundred years hence may be the better for? No, not one jot! There will not be any sum or outcome or result of this ceaseless labor and movement; it vanishes in the moment that it is done; and in a hundred years nothing will be there, for nothing is there now. There will be no more

sum or result than accumulates from the motion of a revolving cowl on a housetop. Nor do they receive any more sunshine during their lives, for they are unconscious of the sun.

Richard Jefferies, *The Story of My Heart*. By permission of Longmans, Green & Company, Publishers.

DOMINANT IMPRESSION

A FARMHOUSE

The rain was still falling, sweeping down from the half-seen hills, wreathing the wooded peaks with a gray garment of mist, and filling the valley with a whitish cloud.

It fell around the house drearily. It ran down the tubs placed to catch it, dripped from the mossy pump, and drummed on the upturned milk pails, and upon the brown and yellow beehives under the maple trees. The chickens seemed depressed, but the irrepressible blue-jay screamed amid it all, with the same insolent spirit, his plumage untarnished by the wet. The barnyard showed a horrible mixture of mud and mire, through which ✓ Howard caught glimpses of the men, slumping to and fro without more additional protection than a ragged coat and a shapeless felt hat. Contrast

In the sitting-room where his mother sat sewing there was not an ornament, save the etching he had brought. The clock stood on a small shelf, its dial so much defaced that one could not tell the time of day; and when it struck, it was with noticeably disproportionate deliberation, as if it wished to correct any mistake into which the family might have fallen because of its illegible dial.

The paper on the walls showed the first concession of the Puritans to the Spirit of Beauty, and was made up of

a heterogeneous mixture of flowers of unheard-of shapes and colors, arranged in four different ways along the wall. There were no books, no music, and only a few newspapers in sight—a bare, blank, cold drab-colored shelter from the rain, not a home. Nothing cosey, nothing heart-warming; a grim and horrible shed.

*st. farmer in Amer- Hamlin Garland, "Up the Coolly" in Main
ican Literature. Travelled Roads. By permission of Mr. Gar-
land.
followed Stephen Crane*

MR. MASSY'S STATEROOM

Mr. Massy's stateroom—a narrow, one-berth cabin—smelt strongly of soap, and presented to view a swept, dusted, unadorned neatness, not so much bare as barren, not so much severe as starved and lacking in humanity, like the ward of a public hospital, or rather (owing to the size) like the clean retreat of a desperately poor but exemplary person. Not a single photograph frame ornamented the bulkheads; not a single article of clothing, not so much as a spare cap, hung from the brass hooks. All the inside was painted in one plain tint of pale blue; two big sea-chests in sailcloth covers and with iron padlocks fitted exactly in the space under the bunk. One glance was enough to embrace all the strip of scrubbed planks within the four unconcealed corners. The absence of the usual settee was striking; the teak-wood top of the washing-stand seemed hermetically closed, and so was the lid of the writing-desk, which protruded from the partition at the foot of the bed-place, containing a mattress as thin as a pancake under a threadbare blanket with a faded red stripe, and a folded mosquito-net against the nights spent in the harbor. There was not a scrap of paper anywhere in sight, no boots on the floor, no litter of any sort, not a speck of dust anywhere; no traces of pipe-

ash even, which, in a heavy smoker, was morally revolting, like a manifestation of extreme hypocrisy; and the bottom of the old wooden arm-chair (the only seat there), polished with much use, shone as if its shabbiness had been waxed. The screen of leaves on the bank, passing as if unrolled endlessly in the round opening of the port, sent a wavering network of light and shade into the place.

From *Youth*, by Joseph Conrad. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Page & Company.

LADY DEDLOCK'S PLACE *note*

My Lady Dedlock has been down at what she calls, in familiar conversation, her "place" in Lincolnshire. The waters are out in Lincolnshire. An arch of the bridge in the park has been sapped and sopped away. The adjacent low-lying ground, for half a mile in breadth, is a stagnant river, with melancholy trees for islands in it, and a surface punctured all over, all day long, with falling rain. My Lady Dedlock's "place" has been extremely dreary. The weather, for many a day and night, has been so wet that the trees seem wet through, and the soft loppings and prunings of the woodman's axe can make no crash or crackle as they fall. The deer, looking soaked, leave quagmires, where they pass. The shot of a rifle loses its sharpness in the moist air, and its smoke moves in a tardy little cloud toward the green rise, coppice-topped, that makes a background for the falling rain. The view from my Lady Dedlock's own windows is alternately a lead-coloured view, and a view in India ink. The vases on the stone terrace in the foreground catch the rain all day; and the heavy drops fall, drip, drip, drip, upon the broad flagged pavement, called, from old time, the Ghost's Walk, all night. On Sundays, the little church

in the park is mouldy; the oaken pulpit breaks out into a cold sweat; and there is a general smell and taste as of the ancient Dedlocks in their graves. My Lady Dedlock (who is childless), looking out in the early twilight from her boudoir at a keeper's lodge, and seeing the light of a fire upon the latticed panes, and smoke rising from the chimney, and a child, chased by a woman, running out into the rain to meet the shining figure of a wrapped-up man coming through the gate, has been put quite out of temper. My Lady Dedlock says she has been "bored to death."

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*.

FOG IN THE COURTS OF CHANCERY

London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill-temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows

among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the water-side pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by husband-man and ploughboy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time,—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.

The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest, near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed old corporation: Temple Bar. And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds, this day, in the sight of heaven and earth.

On such an afternoon, if ever, the Lord High Chancellor ought to be sitting here—as here he is—with a foggy glory round his head, softly fenced in with crimson cloth and curtains, addressed by a large advocate with great whiskers, a little voice, and an interminable brief, and outwardly directing his contemplation to the lantern in the roof, where he can see nothing but fog. . . . Well may the court be dim, with wasting candles here and there; well may the fog hang heavy in it, as if it would never get out; well may the stained glass windows lose their color, and admit no light of day into the place; well may the uninitiated from the streets, who peep in through the glass panes in the door, be deterred from entrance from its owlish aspect; and by the drawl languidly echoing to the roof from the padded dais where the Lord High Chancellor looks into the lantern that has no light in it, and where the attendant wigs are all stuck in a fog-bank! This is the Court of Chancery.

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*.

note

AN AUGUST DAY IN MARSEILLES

Thirty years ago, Marseilles lay in the burning sun one day.

A blazing sun upon a fierce August day was no greater rarity in southern France then, than at any other time, before or since. Everything in Marseilles, and about Marseilles, had stared at the fervid sky, and been stared at in return, until a staring habit had become universal there. Strangers were stared out of countenance by staring white houses, staring white walls, staring white streets, staring tracts of arid road, staring hills from which verdure was burnt away. The only things to be seen not fixedly staring and glaring were the vines drooping

under their load of grapes. These did occasionally wink a little, as the hot air barely moved their faint leaves.

There was no wind to make a ripple on the foul water within the harbor, or on the beautiful sea without. The line of demarcation between the two colors, black and blue, showed the point which the pure sea would not pass; but it lay as quiet as the abominable pool, with which it never mixed. Boats without awnings were too hot to touch; ships blistered at their moorings; the stones of the quays had not cooled, night or day, for months. Hindoos, Russians, Chinese, Spaniards, Portuguese, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Genoese, Neapolitans, Venetians, Greeks, Turks, descendants from all the builders of Babel, come to trade at Marseilles, sought the shade alike—taking refuge in any hiding-place from a sea too intensely blue to be looked at, and a sky of purple, set with one great flaming jewel of fire.

The universal stare made the eyes ache. Towards the distant line of Italian coast, indeed, it was a little relieved by light clouds of mist, slowly rising from the evaporation of the sea, but it softened nowhere else. Far away the staring roads, deep in dust, stared from the hillside, stared from the hollow, stared from the interminable plain. Far away the dusty vines overhanging wayside cottages, and the monotonous wayside avenues of parched trees without shade, drooped beneath the stare of earth and sky. So did the horses with drowsy bells, in long files of carts, creeping slowly towards the interior; so did their recumbent drivers, when they were awake, which rarely happened; so did the exhausted laborers in the fields. Everything that lived or grew was oppressed by the glare; except the lizard, passing swiftly over rough stone walls, and the cicada, chirping his hot dry chirp, like a rattle. The very dust was scorched brown, and

something quivered in the atmosphere as if the air itself were panting.

Blinds, shutters, curtains, awnings, were all closed and drawn to keep out the stare. Grant it but a chink or keyhole, and it shot in like a white-hot arrow.

Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit*.

THE BRONZE HORSES

The blue sky of Italy; the blue sky of Rome. Sunlight pouring white and clear from the wide-stretched sky. Sunlight sliding softly over white marble, lying in jasmine circles before cool porticos, striking sharply upon roofs and domes, recoiling before straight façades of grey granite, foiled and beaten by the deep halls of temples.

seem
 Sunlight on tiles and tufa, sunlight on basalt and porphyry. The sky stripes Rome with sun and shadow; strips of yellow, strips of blue, pepperdots of purple and orange. It whip-lashes the four great horses of gilded bronze, harnessed to the bronze *quadriga* on the Arch of Nero, and they trot slowly forward without moving. The horses tread the marbles of Rome beneath their feet. Their golden flanks quiver in the sunlight. One foot paws the air. A step, and they will lance into the air, Pegasus-like, stepping the wind. But they do not take the step. They wait—poised, treading Rome as they trod Alexandria, as they trod the narrow Island of Cos. The spokes of the *quadriga* wheels flash, but they do not turn. They burn like day-stars above the Arch of Nero. The horses poise over Rome, a constellation of morning, triumphant above Emperors, proud, indifferent, enduring, relentlessly spurning the hot dust of Rome. Hot dust clouds up about them, but not one particle sticks to their gilded manes. Dust is nothing, a mere smoke of disap-

pearing hours. Slowly they trot forward without moving, and time passes and passes them, brushing along their sides like wind.

Amy Lowell, *Can Grande's Castle*. By permission of and by special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

MONT ST. MICHEL

The Archangel loved heights. Standing on the summit of the tower that crowned his church, wings upspread, sword uplifted, the devil crawling beneath, and the cock, symbol of eternal vigilance, perched on his mailed foot, Saint Michael held a place of his own in heaven and on earth which seems, in the eleventh century, to leave hardly room for the Virgin of the Crypt at Chartres, still less for the Beau Christ of the thirteenth century at Amiens. The Archangel stands for Church and State, and both militant. He is the conqueror of Satan, the mightiest of all created spirits, the nearest to God. His place was where the danger was greatest; therefore you find him here. For the same reason he was, while the pagan danger lasted, the patron saint of France. So the Normans, when they were converted to Christianity, put themselves under his powerful protection. So he stood for centuries on his Mount in Peril of the Sea, watching across the tremor of the immense ocean—*immensi tremor oceani*—as Louis XI, inspired for once to poetry, inscribed on the collar of the Order of Saint Michael which he created. So soldiers, nobles, and monarchs went on pilgrimage to his shrine; so the common people followed, and still follow, like ourselves.

The church stands high on the summit of this granite rock, and on its west front is the platform, to which the

tourist ought first to climb. From the edge of this platform the eye plunges down, two hundred and thirty-five feet, to the wide sands or the wider ocean, as the tides recede or advance, under an infinite sky, over a restless sea, which even we tourists can understand and feel without books or guides; but, when we turn from the western view, and look at the church door, thirty or forty yards from the parapet where we stand, one needs to be eight centuries old to know what this mass of encrusted architecture meant to its builders, and even then one must still learn to feel it. The man who wanders into the twelfth century is lost, unless he can grow prematurely young.

. . . Serious and simple to excess! is it not? Young people rarely enjoy it. They prefer the Gothic, even as you see it here, looking at us from the choir, through the great Norman arch. No doubt they are right, since they are young: but men and women who have lived long and are tired,—who want rest,—who have done with aspirations and ambition,—whose life has been a broken arch,—feel this repose and self-restraint as they feel nothing else. The quiet strength of these curved lines, the solid support of these heavy columns, the moderate proportions, even the modified lights, the absence of display, of effort, of self-consciousness, satisfy them as no other art does. They come back to it to rest, after a long circle of pilgrimage,—the cradle of rest from which their ancestors started. Even here they find the repose none too deep.

Indeed, when you look longer at it, you begin to doubt whether there is any repose in it at all,—whether it is not the most unreposeful thought ever put into architectural form. Perched on the extreme point of this abrupt rock, the Church Militant with its aspirant Archangel stands high above the world, and seems to

threaten heaven itself. The idea is the stronger and more restless because the Church of Saint Michael is surrounded and protected by the world and the society over which it rises, as Duke William rested on his barons and their men. Neither the Saint nor the Duke was troubled by doubts about his mission. Church and State, Soul and Body, God and Man, are all one at Mont-Saint-Michel, and the business of all is to fight, each in his own way, or to stand guard for each other. Neither Church nor State is intellectual, or learned, or even strict in dogma. Here we do not feel the Trinity at all; the Virgin but little; Christ hardly more; we feel only the Archangel, and the Unity of God. We have little logic here, and simple faith, but we have energy.

Henry Adams, *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*.
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REMINISCENT

MY VISIT TO BUENOS AYRES

Just opposite the house we stayed at there was a large church, one of the largest of the numerous churches of the city, and one of my most vivid memories relates to a great annual festival at the church—that of the patron saint's day. It had been open to worshippers all day, but the chief service was held about three o'clock in the afternoon; at all events, it was at that hour when a great attendance of fashionable people took place. I watched them as they came in couples, families and small groups, in every case the ladies, beautifully dressed, attended by their cavaliers. At the door of the church the gentleman would make his bow, and withdraw to the street before the building, where a sort of outdoor gathering was formed

of all those who had come as escorts to the ladies, and where they would remain until the service was over. The crowd in the street grew and grew until there were about four or five hundred gentlemen, mostly young, in the gathering, all standing in small groups, conversing in an animated way, so that the street was filled with the loud humming sound of their blended voices. These men were all natives, all of the good or upper class of the native society, and all dressed exactly alike in the fashion of that time. It was their dress and the uniform appearance of so large a number of persons, most of them with young, handsome, animated faces, that fascinated me and kept me on the spot gazing at them until the big bells began to thunder at the conclusion of the service and the immense concourse of gaily-dressed ladies swarmed out, and immediately the meeting broke up, the gentlemen hurrying back to meet them.

They all wore silk hats and the glossiest black broad-cloth, not even a pair of trousers of any other shade was seen; and all wore the scarlet silk or fine cloth waistcoat which, at that period, was considered the right thing for every citizen of the republic to wear; also, in lieu of buttonhole, a scarlet ribbon pinned to the lapel of the coat. It was a pretty sight, and the concourse reminded me of a flock of military starlings, a black or dark-plumaged bird with a scarlet breast, one of my feathered favorites.

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MORNING PRAYERS AT EARLHAM

The slightest turn of memory takes me back at any time to Earlham, to the big sunny hall where we used to

assemble for morning prayers. The shallow staircase descended on one side, by the great front-door. Opposite to it another door opened to the garden, and through two wide windows, tangled with roses and vines, the sunshine welled into the house. The hall was broad and square, rather bare of furniture; against the wall there were seats, velveteed and fringed, once of a strong old crimson, but now faded away into rose-leaf colours under the suns of many summers; there was a round table, where our grandfather sat with his large Bible. At prayer-time there were also benches, set out in rows, for the servants who came filing in through a swing-door in one corner. First the stout little bright-eyed cook, whose place was next to the garden-door—she carefully shut it against the dewy morning air if it happened to stand open; then the rest of the household in due order. It struck us as an imposing procession; from our red seats under the windows we looked across and watched it streaming and streaming through the swing-door, from the back-region of the house.

Prayers began with an unaccompanied hymn. Our grandmother, standing before the wide chimney, struck into the first notes, with a little toss of her lace-capped head—lifted up her singularly sweet and resonant voice, and the rest of us followed in unison. She sang in her old age, with a voice as fresh as a girl's, soaring and pealing with perfect ease; and her voice had a quality that I never seem to have heard in another, clear and vivid and plangent, like some kind of silver-wired harp. She soared into the melody quite at random, with no thought of the pitch; and sometimes it was a trying one for the congregation, and after the first verse she would cry "A little lower," and start the second verse in a more tenable key. She sang from the heart, and the words of

the hymn (soundly evangelical) floated upon the melody, dominating it, *using* it, so that the tune became a real accompaniment to the words. Our repertory was not greatly varied; but often and often as the same familiar song was repeated—"Hark my soul," perhaps, or "Jesus stand among us,"—she would utter the words of praise and thanksgiving with a thrill, a radiant conviction, as though she made them her own for the first time.

Meanwhile our grandfather sat at his round table, one hand propping the bald dome of his forehead, the other arm embracing the big Bible that lay before him. He took no part in the hymn, he waited; and when we were seated he read the chapter over which he had been brooding. And then there was a pause, and we settled ourselves anew, and a tract of time opened before us that seemed very long indeed; it had no measurable length, like a hymn or a chapter, for it depended on our grandfather alone. There was first a commentary about the passage he had read; he talked of it, I suppose he would explain and expound it; but what do I know?—it was a time that passed for me in a methodical scrutiny of the assembly, our dear and well-known friends of the household, ranged on their benches, our uncles and cousins on the red settees. Presently the arm that embraced the Bible began slowly, slowly to close it, and the exposition was at an end, and we knelt; and then there was nothing to do but to wait, helping oneself out with a little rhythmical fidgeting.

Our grandfather, fervently, appealingly, lyrically, delivered a long improvisation of prayer. All of it is lost to me, save for an occasional landmark that I could recognize and appreciate as it passed; such were topical points, special invocations on behalf of members of the family, often ourselves, who had just arrived or were

about to depart. Otherwise it is all vague; but I can hear the warm, mild old voice rising and falling with intonations like an autumn wind—or like the chant, as it strikes me now, of a minstrel of the family roof-tree, a voice soaring and sinking in slightly melancholy cadences, while it lingers over a half-extemporized, half-traditional lay. It was always a wonder to us—we had no other reflection upon the matter—that our grandfather could uplift his eloquence afresh on every morning of the year, with never a lapse or a hesitation; but it ran on lines long established, I imagine, as the eloquence of a bard over the glories of the past. It was certainly in its manner the voice of poetry. The minutes lengthened; and at last the voice rose in a familiar climax and fell on the words (always the same) “We ask it—in the name of—” and presently we were all joining in the Lord’s Prayer, a goodly volume of sound, with the fervour of tension relieved. A last blessing, a pause, and the stir of life began again.

Percy Lubbock, *Earlham*. Copyright 1922, by Charles Scribner’s Sons. By permission of the publishers.

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

He felt, indeed, that the gaze of the whole world was upon him, but he responded to it proudly, staring boldly around him as though he had been seated on merry-go-rounds all his days. . . . From where he was he could see the Fair lifted up and translated into a fantastic splendor. Nothing was certain, nothing defined—above him a canopy of evening sky, with circles and chains of stars mixed with the rosy haze of the flame of the Fair; opposite him was the Palace of “The Two-Headed Giant from the Caucasus,” a huge man as portrayed in the

picture hanging on his outer walls, a giant naked, save for a bearskin, with one head black and one yellow, and white protruding teeth in both mouths. Next to him was the Fortune Teller's, and outside this a little man with a hump beat a drum. Then there was "The Theatre of Tragedy and Mirth," with a poster on one side of the door portraying a lady drowning in the swiftest of rivers, but with the prospect of being saved by a stout gentleman who leaned over from the bank and grasped her hair. Then there was the "Chamber of the Fat Lady and the Six Little Dwarfs," and the entry to this was guarded by a dirty sour-looking female who gnashed her teeth at a hesitating public, before whom, with a splendid indifference to appearance, she consumed, out of a piece of newspaper, her evening meal.

All these things were in Jeremy's immediate vision, and beyond them was a haze that his eyes could not penetrate. It held, he knew, wild beasts, because he could hear quite clearly from time to time the lion and the elephant and the tiger; it held music, because from somewhere through all the noise and confusion the tune of a band penetrated; it held buyers and sellers and treasures and riches, and all the inhabitants of the world—surely all the world *must* be here tonight. And then, beyond the haze, there were the silent and mysterious gipsy caravans. Dark, with their little square windows, and their coloured walls, and their round wheels, and the smell of wood fires, and the noises of hissing kettles and horses cropping the grass, and around them the still night world with the thick woods and the dark river.

He did not see it all as he sat on his horse—he was, as yet, too young; but he did feel the contrast between the din and glare about him and the silence and dark beyond, and, afterwards, looking back, he knew that he had found

in that same contrast the very heart of romance. As it was, he simply clutched his horse's beautiful head and waited for the ride to begin. . . .

They were off! He felt his horse quiver under him, and he saw the mansions of the Two-Headed Giant and the Fat Lady slip to the right, and the light seemed to swing like the skirt of someone's dress, upwards across the floor, and from the heart of the golden woman and the king and the minstrel a scream burst forth as though they were announcing the end of the world. After that he had no clear idea as to what occurred. He was swung into space, and all the life that had been so stationary, the booths, the lights, the men and women, the very stars went swinging with him as though to cheer him on; the horse under him galloped before, and the faster he galloped the wilder was the music, and the dizzier the world. He was exultant, omnipotent, supreme. He had long known that this glory was somewhere if it could only be found; all his days he seemed to have been searching for it; he beat the horse's neck, he drove his legs against his sides. "Go on! Go on! Go on!" he cried. "Faster! Faster! Faster!"

The strangest things seemed to rise to his notice and then fall again—a peaked policeman's hat, flowers, a sudden flame of gas, the staring eyes and dead white arms of the golden woman, the flying forms of the horses in front of him. All the world was on horseback, all the world was racing higher and higher, faster and faster. He saw someone near him rise on to his horse's back and stand on it, waving his arms. He would like to have done that, but he found that he was part of his horse, as though he had been glued to it. He shouted, he cried aloud, he was so happy that he thought of no one and nothing. . . . The flame danced about him in a circle,

he seemed to rise so high that there was a sudden stillness, he was in the very heart of the stars; then there came the supreme moment when, as he had always known, that one day he would be, he was master of the world. . . . Then, like Lucifer, he fell. Slowly the stars receded, the music slackened, people rocked on to their feet again. . . . The Two-Headed Giant slipped back once more into his place, he saw the sinister lady still devouring her supper, women looking up at him gasped. His horse gave a last little leap and died.

From *Jeremy*, by Hugh Walpole, Copyright 1919, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

THE BERLIN OF THE EIGHTIES

The city that I remember, the Berlin of the eighties, was rugged and grey. But it had nothing forbidding in its aspect, rather an air of homely and familiar comfort. There were few private houses, but people lived in their apartments in large airy rooms with tall French windows and neat, white tile ovens. The streets were monotonous in appearance but admirably clean. There were no posters, no public advertisements except upon the pillars erected for that purpose, the traffic of horse-cars, omnibuses and cabs was orderly and convenient. The cabs, driven by red-faced, loquacious cabbies in blue-caped coats and top-hats, were cheap. My father and mother, though far from rich, used them constantly, and I remember being driven for hours through the black-draped city on that icy day in 1888 on which the old emperor's body lay in state in the cathedral.

My earliest glimpses of beauty are characteristic of the city. One was the windows of the Royal Porcelain Works on the Leipziger Strasse. With all the exquisite sensitiveness of childhood I saw those wonderful little

figures and their porcelain veils and draperies and delicately moulded forms. They were so tiny and yet so perfect, and they thrilled me far more than Rauch's equestrian statue of the great Frederic or the chariot of victory over the city gate. The latter were dutifully impressed upon me by my father; my mother let me stand and gaze my fill before the windows of the porcelain shop. . . . But the great sight to me, which I never saw without a lifting of the heart, was a certain public square. One walked or drove through a short street in which villas stood in gardens; at the end of that street one came upon the square quite suddenly. To that moment I always looked forward; the sensation was like the sudden crash of an orchestra. For the square spread out with an airiness, a fine and noble amplitude of shape and proportion, a grace and majesty at once that I despair of rendering into words. I have seen nothing like it since. Perhaps it seemed finer to my childish eyes than it was or is; but I am willing to yield to that old vision as a true one, since the seat of beauty is after all in the beholding mind.

Beyond the square lay the Tiergarten. Thither I was taken on many pleasant afternoons. And I can still see very clearly the statue of Flora surrounded by gorgeous flower-beds and the monument of Queen Louise and the "snail hill" swarming with other children and their nursemaids; I can still hear their merry cries; I can still feel the stinging coolness on my heated throat of the milk sold at the famous kiosks of Bolle. But when I was four or five years old I would beg my nurse to take me to the gold-fish pond. It was generally still by the little artificial lake, and I loved the stillness; the dark green foliage was very thick all around and the dusk fell early there. The mute darting about of the fishes seemed

mysterious and soothing, the stone benches were cool and strong and bare. I felt in this spot without knowing it, the majesty of places withdrawn from the cries of men. . . . Another scene of the great park I remember: a winter scene. Bare trees and the frozen river around the Rousseau Island and the gay scarfs of the skaters. And suddenly dusk and a brazen sun-disc black-barred by trees. Then the swift early winter night and the gas-lamps of the streets and the warmth and security of home. . . .

But the out-of-door scenes of winter that I recall are few: another square and the snow-flakes falling thick and my father and I walking across it to a Vienna café where he played chess on Sunday mornings. This is one scene. And another is our sturdy maid carrying me from a playmate's house to a cab through a blinding blizzard. And the third is the Christmas fair—long since abolished—on the Belle-Alliance Square. Twinkling lights in the frosty air, and booths noisy and gay with cheap toys and cakes, and everywhere the sharp odor of the fir-trees.

I loved spring more than even this—the cool, virginal, gradual spring of the North. The windows were opened and children reappeared on the streets and great boughs of lilacs were sold. Have the German lilacs a headier and sweeter fragrance than ours? It seemed to fill the air and the heart; it meant the winds of spring and people sitting in gardens and casting aside their cares. For the Germans, I can recognize now, yield to the natural moods of the seasons. Spring is to them still the spring of the folk-songs and they would like to pack a bundle and wander out into the land with lilac blossoms in their hats. . . . My father and mother took a cab on Sunday and drove in the Tiergarten or else went by boat up the river Spree to Treptow and there we sat on pleas-

ant terraces and watched the life on the water. Even then I loved to see men and youths in their skiffs with bare white arms and legs and paddles flashing in the sunlight, and took a deep delight in the strong, silent, virile rhythm of the rise and fall of their oars. . . .

In the summer of my sixth year my father rented a house by a lake in Straussberg near Berlin. The village was still isolated. You took the train and then a stage-coach to reach it. There were swans on the lake and a boat, sheep in the meadows and goose-berry bushes in the garden. Over all a deep, brooding, old-world peace. . . .

Two scenes stand before me which symbolise the character of the social group from which I sprang. This is one: I am sitting in a half-darkened room and my heart beats and my cheeks burn. It is Christmas Eve. I look through the dark pane and across the street. Ah, there, behind an uncurtained window, a tree with candles. Quickly I turn my eyes away. I do not want to taste the glory until it is truly mine. And at last, at last, a bell rings. The folding doors open and there—in the drawing room—stands my own tree in its glimmering splendor and around it the gifts from my parents and my grandmother and my uncles and aunts—charming German toys and books of fairytales and marchpane from Königsberg. And my mother takes me by the hand and leads me to the table and I feel as though I were myself walking straight into a fairytale. . . .

And the other scene: It was my grandmother's custom, in pious remembrance of her husband, to visit the temple on the chief Jewish holidays—New Year and the Day of Atonement. And once, on the day of the great white feast, I was taken there to see her. The temple was large and rather splendid; the great seven-branched candelabra were of shining silver. The rabbi, the cantor

and the large congregation of men were all clad in their gleaming shrouds and their white silken praying shawls and had white caps on their heads. I can still see one venerable old man who read his Hebrew book through a large magnifying glass. The whiteness of that penitential scene was wonderful and solemn. Then the first star came out and the great day was over and in the vestibule I saw my grandmother reverently saluted by her sons who wished her a happy holiday.

Ludwig Lewisohn, *Upstream*. By permission of Boni and Liveright, Publishers.

EARLY READING

My first two books were collections of stories written for little children and I thought them delightful. But someone brought me a small, greenish volume bound in boards. It was called Bechstein's Märchen. Faded and tattered the little book lies before me as I write. I turn the pages—to this day I know them almost by heart—I look at the small, stiff, quaint, inimitably haunting wood-cuts. . . . Immemorial romance, sombre and magical world of dim forests and mediaeval cities and doomed kings, of shepherds and gnomes, full of old racial memories, free as the imagination of childhood, deep as the heart of man! The style, I see now, was worthy of the matter—concrete, marrowy, quaint as the wood-cuts with flashes now and then, of a wild, grotesque humor. . . . For the first time in my life I became insistent, begging for books and more books. Thus I read Grimm and Andersen for myself now and the Arabian Nights and a large and precious volume called Al-Runa in which were gathered fairytales of all peoples—German and English and Norse, Romaic and Russian and the weird and cruel

legends of the Southern Slavs. I read until my eyes ached and my forehead was fevered. If my mother bade me go and play in the open, I lay on the door-step without and wept in a passion of despair. No wonder! I have lived with books and loved the best things in more than one literature. Yet what has the highest delight of later years been to that pure and passionate joy, that ecstasy of absorption in which I became one with the things I read and saw with my own eyes castles by the shores of Norseland, dragons on the banks of lustrous rivers and with my own ears heard the blowing of the horns of Elfland. . . .

. . . I came into possession of a set of very red volumes: the marvelous chap-books of the Reformation age—Griseldis, Genoveva, Robert the Devil, Dr. Faustus—naïve and knightly or magical and grim; and of two slimmer volumes called Beckers Erzählungen aus der Alten Welt, which contained the Iliad and the Odyssey in simple, lucid German prose. In the reading of these, especially of the Odyssey, culminated the imaginative joys of my childhood. I do not know Greek; I cannot read Homer in the original. Yet I am sure that I know what Homer is. In a plain room behind the store in which apples and cloth and furniture and ploughshares and rice and tinned fish were sold to chattering Negroes, I sat with my book and clearly heard

“The surge and thunder of the Odyssey”

and saw Nausicaa and her maidens, white limbed and fair, on the shore of the wine-dark sea, and dwelt with Odysseus on the island of Callypso and returned home with him to Ithaca—not without tears—and listened to the twanging bow-string that sped the avenging arrows. The wood-cut that was the frontispiece of the little vol-

ume showed Hermes on his mission of command to Circe. Above floats the god with his staff and his winged cap and sandals. Below him stretches the immeasurable stream of ocean. In the background, small and far but very clear, lies an island with a tiny fane of Doric columns. I gazed at the picture for hours and knew the freshness, the grace, and the clarity of that morning of the world.

Ludwig Lewisohn, *Upstream*. By permission of Boni and Liveright, Publishers.

SAWDUST AND SIN

A belt of rhododendrons grew close down to one side of our pond; and along the edge of it many things flourished rankly. If you crept through the undergrowth and crouched by the water's rim, it was easy—if your imagination were in healthy working order—to transport yourself in a trice to the heart of a tropical forest. Overhead the monkeys chattered, parrots flashed from bough to bough, strange large blossoms shone around you, and the push and rustle of great beasts moving unseen thrilled you deliciously. And if you lay down with your nose an inch or two from the water, it was not long ere the old sense of proportion vanished clean away. The glittering insects that darted to and fro on its surface became sea-monsters dire, the gnats that hung above them swelled to albatrosses, and the pond itself stretched out into a vast inland sea, whereon a navy might ride secure, and whence at any moment the hairy scalp of a sea-serpent might be seen to emerge.

It is impossible, however, to play at tropical forests properly, when homely accents of the human voice intrude; and all my hopes of seeing a tiger seized by a

crocodile while drinking (*vide* picture-books, *passim*) vanished abruptly, and earth resumed her old dimensions, when the sound of Charlotte's prattle somewhere hard by broke in on my primeval seclusion. Looking out from the bushes, I saw her trotting towards an open space of lawn the other side of the pond, chattering to herself in her accustomed fashion, a doll tucked under either arm, and her brow knit with care. Propping up her double burden against a friendly stump, she sat down in front of them, as full of worry and anxiety as a Chancellor on a Budget night.

Her victims, who stared resignedly in front of them, were recognisable as Jerry and Rosa. Jerry hailed from far Japan: his hair was straight and black; his one garment cotton, of a simple blue; and his reputation was distinctly bad. Jerome was his proper name, from his supposed likeness to the holy man who hung in a print on the staircase; though a shaven crown was the only thing in common 'twixt Western saint and Eastern sinner. Rosa was typical British, from her flaxen poll to the stout calves she displayed so liberally, and in character she was of the blameless order of those who have not yet been found out.

I suspected Jerry from the first; there was a latent devilry in his slant eyes as he sat there moodily, and knowing what he was capable of I scented trouble in store for Charlotte. Rosa I was not so sure about; she sat demurely and upright, and looked far away into the tree-tops in a visionary, world-forgetting sort of way; yet the prim purse of her mouth was somewhat overdone, and her eyes glittered unnaturally.

Kenneth Grahame, *The Golden Age*. Copyright by Dodd, Mead, and Company, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

THRAE

In my roavings and ramblings as a boy I had often skirted the old stone house in the hollow. But my first clear remembrance of it is of a hot summer's day. I had climbed to the crest of a hill till then unknown to me, and stood there, hot and breathless in the bright slippery grass, looking down on its grey walls and chimneys as if out of a dream. And as if out of a dream already familiar to me.

My real intention in setting out from home that morning had been to get to a place called East Dene. My mother had often spoken to me of East Dene—of its trees and waters and green pastures, and the rare birds and flowers to be found there. Ages ago, she had told me, an ancestor of our family had dwelt in this place. But she smiled a little strangely when I asked her to take me there. "All in good time, my dear," she whispered into my ear, "all in very good time! Just follow your small nose." What kind of time, I wondered, was *very good time*? And *follow my nose*—how far? Such reflections indeed only made me the more anxious to be gone.

Early that morning, then, I had started out when the dew was still sparkling, and the night mists had but just lifted. But my young legs soon tired of the steep, boulder-strewn hills, the chalky ravines, and burning sun, and having, as I say, come into view of the house in the valley, I went no further. Instead, I sat down on the hot turf—the sweet smell of thyme in the air, a few harebells nodding around me—and stared, down and down.

After that first visit, scarcely a week passed but that I found myself on this hill again. The remembrance of

the house stayed in my mind; would keep returning to me, like a bird to its nest. Sometimes even in the middle of the night I would wake up and lie unable to sleep again for thinking of it—seeing it in my head; solemn, secret, strange.

There is a little flickering lizard called the Chameleon which, they say, changes its colour according to the place where it happens to be. So with this house. It was never the same for two hours together. I have seen it gathered close up in its hollow in the livid and coppery gloom of storm; crouched like a hare in winter under a mask of snow; dark and silent beneath the changing sparkle of the stars; and like a palace out of an Arabian tale in the milky radiance of the moon. THRAE was the name inscribed on its gateway, but in letters so faint and faded as to be almost illegible.

In a sense I was, I suppose, a trespasser in this Thrae; until at least I became acquainted with Miss Taroone, the lady who lived in it. For I made pretty free with her valley, paddled and fished in its stream, and now and then helped myself to a windfall in her green bird-haunted orchards, where grew a particularly sharp and bright-rinded apple of which I have never heard the name. As custom gave me confidence, I ventured nearer and nearer to the house and would sometimes take a rest squatting on a manger in the big empty barn, looking out into the sunshine. The wings of the flies shone like glass in its shafts of light, and the robins whistled under its timber roof so shrill as almost to deafen one's ears.

Few strangers passed that way. Now and then I saw in the distance what might have been a beggar. To judge from his bundle he must have done pretty well at the house. Once, as I turned out of a little wood of

birches, I met a dreadful-faced man in the lane who lifted up his hand at sight of me, and with white glaring eyes, uttered a horrible imprecation. He was chewing some fruit stolen out of the orchard, and at the very sight of him I ran like Wat himself.

Once, too, as my head looked down over the hill-crest, there stood an old carriage and a drowsy horse drawn up beside the porch—with its slender wooden pillars and a kind of tray above, on which rambled winter jasmine, turfs of self-sown weeds and Traveller's Joy. I edged near enough to see there was a crown emblazoned on the panel of the carriage door. Nobody sat inside, and the coachman asleep on the box made me feel more solitary and inquisitive than ever.

Yet in its time the old house must have seen plenty of company. Friends of later years have spoken to me of it. Indeed, not far from Thrae as the crow flies, there was a crossing of high roads, so that any traveller from elsewhere not in haste could turn aside and examine the place if he cared for its looks and was in need of a night's lodging. Yet I do not think many such travellers—if they were men merely of the Town—can have *chosen* to lift that knocker or to set ringing that bell. To any one already lost and benighted its looks must have been forbidding.

Well, as I say, again and again, my lessons done, morning or evening would find me either on the grass slopes above Thrae, or actually in its valley. If I was tired, I would watch from a good distance off its small dark windows in their stone embrasures, and up above them the round greenish tower or turret over which a winged weather-vane twirled with the wind. I might watch: but the only person that I ever actually observed at the windows was an old maid with flaps to her cap, who

would sometimes shake a duster out into the air as if for a signal to someone up in the hills.

Apart from her, I had occasionally seen Miss Taroone herself in the overgrown garden, with her immense shears, or with her trencher of bread-crumbs and other provender, feeding the birds. And I once stole near enough under a hedge to watch this sight. They hopped and pecked in a multitude beneath her hands, tits and robins, starlings and blackbirds, and other much wilder and rarer birds, as if they had no need here for wings, or were under an enchantment more powerful than that of mere crumbs of bread. The meal done, the platter empty, Miss Taroone would clap her hands, and off they would fly with a skirring of wings, with shrill cries and snatches of song to their haunts.

She seemed to mind no weather; standing bareheaded in heavy rain or scorching sunlight. And I confess the sight of her never failed to alarm me. But I made up my mind always to keep my wits about me and my eyes open; and never to be *caught* trespassing.

Then one day, as I slid down from the roof of the barn from amid the branches of a chestnut tree, green with its spiky balls of fruit, I found Miss Taroone standing there in the entry, looking out on me as if out of a frame, or like a stone figure in the niche of a church. She made no stir herself, but her eyes did. Clear cold eyes of the colour of pebbly water, in which I seemed to be of no more importance that a boat floating on the sea. I could neither speak nor run away. I could only gawk at her, my pockets bulging with the unripe chestnuts I had pilfered, and a handsome slit in one leg of my breeches.

Walter de la Mare, "The Story of This Book"
in *Come Hither*. Published by Alfred A.
Knopf, Inc. By permission of Mr. de la Mare.

THE SECRET DRAWER

It must surely have served as a boudoir for the ladies of old time, this little used, rarely entered chamber where the neglected old bureau stood. There was something very feminine in the faint hues of its faded brocades, in the rose and blue of such bits of china as yet remained, and in the delicate old-world fragrance of pot-pourri from the great bowl—blue and white, with funny holes in its cover—that stood on the bureau's flat top. Modern aunts disdained this out-of-the-way, back-water, upstairs room, preferring to do their accounts and grapple with their correspondence in some central position more in the whirl of things, whence one eye could be kept on the carriage drive, while the other was alert for malingering servants and marauding children. Those aunts of a former generation—I sometimes felt—would have suited our habits better. But even by us children, to whom few places were private or reserved, the room was visited but rarely. To be sure, there was nothing particular in it that we coveted or required,—only a few spindle-legged gilt-backed chairs; an old harp, on which, so the legend ran, Aunt Eliza herself used once to play, in years remote, unchronicled; a corner-cupboard with a few pieces of china; and the old bureau. But one other thing the room possessed, peculiar to itself; a certain sense of privacy,—a power of making the intruder feel that he *was* intruding,—perhaps even a faculty of hinting that someone might have been sitting on those chairs, writing at the bureau, or fingering the china, just a second before one entered. No such violent word as “haunted” could possibly apply to this pleasant old-fashioned chamber, which indeed we all rather liked; but there was

no doubt it was reserved and stand-offish, keeping itself to itself.

Uncle Thomas was the first to draw my attention to the possibilities of the old bureau. He was pottering about the house one afternoon, having ordered me to keep at his heels for company,—he was a man who hated to be left one minute alone,—when his eye fell on it. “H’m! Sheraton!” he remarked. (He had a smattering of most things, this uncle, especially the vocabularies). Then he let down the flap, and examined the empty pigeon-holes and dusty panelling. “Fine bit of inlay,” he went on: “good work, all of it. I know the sort. There’s a secret drawer in there somewhere.” Then as I breathlessly drew near, he suddenly exclaimed: “By Jove, I do want to smoke!” and wheeling round he abruptly fled for the garden, leaving me with the cup dashed from my lips. . . .

My whole being was still vibrating to those magic syllables, “secret drawer”; and that particular chord had been touched that never fails to thrill responsive to such words as *cave*, *trap-door*, *sliding-panel*, *bullion*, *ingots*, or *Spanish dollars*. For, besides its own special bliss, who ever heard of a secret drawer with nothing in it? And oh, I did want money so badly! . . .

The room was very still as I approached the bureau,—possessed, it seemed to be, by a sort of hush of expectation. The faint odour of orris-root that floated forth as I let down the flap, seemed to identify itself with the yellows and browns of the old wood, till hue and scent were of one quality and interchangeable. Even so, ere this, the pot-pourri had mixed itself with the tints of the old brocade, and brocade and pot-pourri had long been one. With expectant fingers I explored the empty

pigeon-holes and sounded the depths of the softly-sliding drawers. No books that I knew of gave any general recipe for a quest like this; but the glory, should I succeed unaided, would be all the greater.

To him who is destined to arrive, the fates never fail to afford, on the way, their small encouragements; in less than two minutes, I had come across a rusty button-hook. This was truly magnificent. In the nursery there existed, indeed, a general button-hook, common to either sex; but none of us possessed a private and special button-hook, to lend or refuse as suited the high humour of the moment. I pocketed the treasure carefully and proceeded. At the back of another drawer, three old foreign stamps told me I was surely on the highroad to fortune.

Following on these bracing incentives, came a dull blank period of unrewarded search. In vain I removed all the drawers and felt over every inch of the smooth surfaces, from front to back. Never a knob, spring, or projection met the thrilling finger-tips; unyielding the old bureau stood, stoutly guarding its secret, if secret it really had. I began to grow weary and disheartened. This was not the first time that Uncle Thomas had proved shallow, uninformed, a guide into blind alleys where the echoes mocked you. Was it any good persisting longer? Was anything any good whatever? In my mind I began to review past disappointments, and life seemed one long record of failure and of non-arrival. Disillusioned and depressed, I left my work and went to the window. The light was ebbing from the room, and outside seemed to be collecting itself on the horizon for its concentrated effort of sunset. . . . Westwards the clouds were massing themselves in a low violet bank; below them, to north and south, as far round as eye could

reach, a narrow streak of gold ran out and stretched away, straight along the horizon. Somewhere, very far off, a horn was being blown, clear and thin; it sounded like the golden streak grown audible, while the gold seemed the visible sound. It pricked my ebbing courage, this blended strain of music and colour, and I turned for a last effort; and Fortune thereupon, as if half-ashamed of this unworthy game she had been playing with me, relented, opening her clenched fist. Hardly had I put my hand once more to the obdurate wood, when with a sort of small sigh, almost a sob—as it were—of relief, the secret drawer sprang open..

I drew it out and carried it to the window, to examine it in the failing light. Too hopeless had I gradually grown, in my dispiriting search, to expect very much; and yet at a glance I saw that my basket of glass lay in fragments at my feet. No ingots or dollars were there, to crown me the little Monte Cristo of a week. Outside, the distant horn had ceased its gnat-song, the gold was paling to primrose, and everything was lonely and still. Within, my confident little castles were tumbling down like card-houses, leaving me stripped of estate, both real and personal, and dominated by the depressing reaction.

And yet,—as I looked again at the small collection that lay within that drawer of disillusion, some warmth crept back to my heart as I recognised that a kindred spirit to my own had been at the making of it. Two tarnished gilt buttons,—naval, apparently,—a portrait of a monarch unknown to me, cut from some antique print and deftly coloured by hand in just my own bold style of brush-work,—some foreign copper coins, thicker and clumsier of make than those I hoarded myself,—and a list of birds' eggs, with names of the places where they had been found. Also, a ferret's muzzle, and a twist of

tarry string, still faintly aromatic. It was a real boy's hoard, then, that I had happened upon. He too had found out the secret drawer, this happy starred young person; and here he had stowed away his treasures, one by one, and had cherished them secretly awhile; and then—what? Well, one would never know now the reason why these priceless possessions still lay here unreclaimed; but across the void stretch of years I seemed to touch hands a moment with my little comrade of seasons long since dead.

I restored the drawer, with its contents, to the trusty bureau, and heard the spring click with a certain satisfaction. Some other boy, perhaps, would some day release that spring again. I trusted he would be equally appreciative. As I opened the door to go, I could hear from the nursery at the end of the passage shouts and yells, telling that the hunt was up. Bears, apparently, or bandits, were on the evening bill of fare, judging by the character of the noises. In another minute I would be in the thick of it, in all the warmth and light and laughter. And yet—what a long way off it all seemed, both in space and time, to me yet lingering on the threshold of that old-world chamber!

Kenneth Grahame, *The Golden Age*. Copyright by Dodd, Mead, and Company, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

CHAPTER IV

Sense Description

I

"These have I loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ring'd with blue lines; and feathery faery dust;
Wet roofs beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue, bitter smoke of wood."

Rupert Brooke in those words uttered the *credo* not only of the poet, but also of the descriptive artist: his belief that the world of sense is the real world, and is a world of beauty. No one will write vividly who does not feel keenly; and in no way is the universality of an artist more clearly shown than in his reactions, not to those experiences which are unique and peculiar to himself, but to the common elements in the world of sense in which we all live. Henry Adams, in a passage already quoted, declares that the child, like the animal, lives completely and fully in a world of sight, sound, taste, smell, and feeling; but that education and experience gradually tone down the colors of that world, reducing primary colors to shades, and taking away the instant response to elemental sensations. The healthy child eats for the mere pleasure of taste; the adult connoisseur delicately sips his wine, or sends away the food which is too highly seasoned. "Education" has done its work. "I cannot rank the artist or poet very high," says the

*The Education
of Henry Adams*

naturalist Maurice Thompson, "whose stomach is too aristocratic for wild berries, nuts, and aromatic bark. I fear that such an one has long since allowed that trace of savage vigor, which made him of kin to Pan or Apollo, to slip away and be lost."

[The greatest art has always had a sensuous appeal.]
We feel back of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* a universe pulsating with vigor and life; Greek gods and goddesses, men and women, ate, drank, loved, and lived largely; their banquets ran with nectar, were heaped with ambrosia, and echoed to Olympian laughter. So, too, Milton's Adam and Eve, before the fall, enjoyed to the full the sensuous life of Eden, nor did the angel Raphael himself spurn the physical food and drink they offered him.

Paradise was a place of beauty,

No fear lest dinner cool

groves of myrrh,

And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm,

A wilderness of sweets.

Greek sculpture and Renaissance painting owe their supremacy to the artists' joy in the sensuous appeal of line and color. Shakespeare's plays teem with vitality, and Shakespeare not infrequently interrupts his action for the pleasure of word-painting.

Nowhere else can one find pictures at once as terrible as the faces of Dante's characters in Hell, as tender as his fields in Purgatory, and as glorious as his great Rose of Heaven. Keats, Tennyson, and Browning among the moderns are the poets who most delight in sensuous description; and with the so-called "new poetry" there has come a recrudescence of delight in the world of sense, sometimes pagan, sometimes Elizabethan, but usually possessing something also distinctively modern in its interpretation of

the world,
 The beauty and the wonder and the power,
 The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
 Changes, surprises.

Most powerful of the senses in the average modern human being is that of sight. All of us, who are not blind or color-blind, have some appreciation of color, light, shade, and line. There is a pleasure in color for its own sake—a natural delight in some colors and a dislike of others—for which psychologists offer many explanations. Yet our very familiarity with color makes it difficult to describe; we accept it daily in the many combinations which surround us, and rarely pause to try to express it in words. The poets may help us here; for poets have always delighted in word-painting in color. When Oscar Wilde wrote his *Symphony in Yellow*, he consciously excluded all other colors which surrounded him, which might have interfered with his dominant impression:

An omnibus across the bridge
 Crawls like a yellow butterfly,
 And here and there a passerby
 Shows like a little restless midge.

Big barges full of yellow hay
 Are moved against the shadowy wharf,
 And, like a yellow silken scarf,
 The thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade
 And flutter from the Temple elms,
 And at my feet the pale green Thames
 Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

*Background for
 Pendennis
 Thackeray*

Conrad Aikin in *Variations* has done the same thing with green, and Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, in *The Old Bed* uses gold as his central impression. Better than either of

these, in its exquisite choice of details, is Walter de la Mare's *Silver*.

Most color descriptions, however, are not limited to one or two shades. The clothes we wear, the streets we walk in, the rooms in which we live, the flowers and trees we see, are combinations of colors, and our problem in describing them is a more difficult one. Barrie, it is true, has described a room of one tone—the Dovecot in *Sentimental Tommy*—in which the use of blue and white is purposely so overemphasized that we feel with an amused shock the entrance of another color, when Miss Ailie "turned pink in the blue-and-white room." Among our contemporary writers, there are few who surpass Katherine Mansfield in her exquisite use of color, to which she was evidently unusually sensitive, as the following passage will indicate:¹

Mary brought in the fruit on a tray and with it a glass bowl, and a blue dish, very lovely, with a strange sheen on it as though it had been dipp'd in milk. . . . There were tangerines and apples stained with strawberry pink. Some yellow pears, smooth as silk, some white grapes covered with a silver bloom, and a big cluster of purple ones. . . . When she had finished with them and had made two pyramids of these bright round shapes, she stood away from the table to get the effect—and it really was most curious. For the dark table seemed to melt into the dusky light and the glass dish and the blue bowl to float in the air.

Here the colors blend into harmony; but in these lines which follow they are made purposely startling in their contrast by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson:

A blue-black Nubian picking oranges
At Joffa by a sea of malachite,
In red tarboosh, green sash, and flowing white
Burnous. . . .

¹ Mansfield, Katherine, *Bliss*, Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher.

One of the most difficult of all things to describe, either truly or effectively, is a sunset or sunrise; yet one or the other is the scene to which the amateur nearly always turns for color description, because we have all seen sunsets and sunrises, and hold certain conventionalized ideas of them—conventionalized, chiefly because, as Ruskin would tell us, we *look* at them but we do not *see* them. Cloud colors and cloud forms tax both the observation and the vocabularies of the greatest descriptive artists. Hearn and Ruskin, of all the writers who have attempted such description, have come closest to making the reader feel the infinite changes which go to make sunrise and sunset. Apart from the difficulty of expressing in words the multiplicity of shades which occur during the transformation, there is grave danger that such descriptions will reveal the poverty and carelessness of vocabulary of the average writer. Stevenson knew how difficult it was to find words which accurately express color, “I tried for long,” he says in one of his letters, “to hit upon some language that might catch ever so faintly the indefinable shifting color of olive branches.” Matching colors with words is as essential as—and much more difficult than—matching colors with colors. In a line in *Prince Otto*: “The face of the east was barred with *elemental scarlet*,” Stevenson has conveyed a picture which no other two words could so accurately have given. Hearn’s description of the “day-magic of azure” in *Chita* makes use of many shades of blue and allied colors; the dawn “reddens through a violet east”; it takes “an incredible violet tint”; it becomes “a waste of broken emerald”; it pales to “opaline color of milk and fire.” Ruskin’s magnificent description of a storm over the Roman Campagna expresses the dominant impression in one sentence: “I cannot call it color, it was conflagration.” Two other

examples of a very different sort will illustrate the value of diction in color description: Ruskin in his account of St. Mark's, speaks of the "deep russet-orange lichen, melancholy gold"; and Hearn, in his picture of sunrise at the Port-of-Spain, having sought for words in which to express the inexpressible, and having failed in such careful phrases as "a seemingly diaphanous aureate color," succeeds supremely when he calls it "the very ghost of gold."

But color description is not the only sort of sight description. There are effects of line, of light and shade—used best by etchers and artists in black-and-white—which express what color sometimes cannot. For such pictures as these, the eye must be trained to recognize balance and proportion, mass and contrast. Light itself delighted Milton, most of all when he was blind; *Paradise Lost* contains a number of magnificent apostrophes to "holy Light, offspring of Heaven's first born"; and such pictures as this:

He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell.

Light may be found, well-used, in Pierre Loti's description of mid-day on the Red Sea; in Ruskin's "last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea"; in Conrad's "disc of water, glittering and sinister" or his "high clear flame, an immense and lonely flame"; in Stevenson's "stars wavering in the shaking pool," and in a brief sentence of Hearn's: "Stars thrill out."

Sight description, in all its forms, with line, color, contrast, we will find everywhere in the sketches of Katherine

Mansfield. The following is from "The Man without a Temperament" in *Bliss*:

The sun was still high. Every leaf, every flower in the garden lay open, motionless, as if exhausted, and a sweet, rich, rank smell filled the quivering air. Out of the thick fleshy leaves of a cactus there rose an aloe stem loaded with pale flowers that looked as though they had been cut out of butter; light flashed upon the lifted spears of the palms; over a bed of scarlet waxen flowers some big black insects "zoom-zoomed"; a great, gaudy creeper, orange splashed with jet, sprawled against a wall.

In the following passage, also from *Bliss*, the artist in words has come as close to actual painting as one art may approach to another:

The windows of the drawing-room opened on to a balcony overlooking the garden. At the far end, against the wall, there was a tall, slender pear tree in fullest richest bloom; it stood perfect, as though becalmed against the jade-green sky. Bertha couldn't help feeling, even from this distance, that it had not a single bud or a faded petal. Down below, in the garden beds, the red and yellow tulips, heavy with flowers, seemed to lean upon the dusk. A gray cat, dragging its belly, crept across the lawn, and a black one, its shadow, trailed after.

II

Next to sight description, that of sound occupies the important place in literature—naturally enough, for these are the two senses which man most uses and which he most needs. In all primitive languages there is a tendency to reproduce in words the sounds of nature—a tendency which, when it becomes a conscious figure of speech, we call *onomatopœia*, that is "name-making." The "sound words" thus produced, which are to be found in every language, are a great aid in description. In no other kind of writing is the choice of words more important than here. A little study of any dictionary of synonyms will prove a revelation to the person who has

thought little about the gradations, not only in meaning, but also in effect, of "sound words." Consider the variations in significance of these words: twang, cadence, resonance, sonorousness; din, clang, clatter, racket, hubbub, hullabaloo; peal, roar, clang, thunder; thud, burst, detonation; echo, jingle, plash, clink; hiss, buzz, rustle; harsh, hoarse, stridulous; acute, shrill, piercing; melodious, dulcet, mellifluous. All these—and dozens of others, are sound words; yet no two of them are exact synonyms.

Poets have always delighted in sound. Milton was, from childhood, passionately fond of music; that may be one of the reasons—his blindness another—why his later poems are so filled with sound descriptions. There is music everywhere in his verse, music which would "take the prison'd soul and lap it in Elysium." Paradise, Eden, even Hell, are filled with music; but Hell holds, too, lamentation and wailing, and the reverberation of that mighty sound which has filled the world since Sin opened the gates of destruction:

On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus.

In prose, the same attention to the diction of sound description is essential. Stevenson thus describes the sounds as he sat on the seacoast: "A little faint talk of waves upon the beach; the wild strange crying of seagulls over the sea; and the hoarse wood-pigeons and shrill sweet robins full of their autumn love-making among the trees made up a delectable concerto of peaceful noise." Hearn speaks in *Chita* of "one continuous shrilling—

keen as the steel speech of a saw,—the stridulous telegraphy of crickets,” and again of “wastes of reedy morass where, even of breathless nights, the quaggy soil trembles to a sound like thunder of breakers on a coast; the storm-roar of billions of reptile voices chanting in cadence—rhythmically surging in stupendous *crescendo* or *diminuendo*—a monstrous and appalling chorus of frogs!” Not less effective is Hardy’s description of an exactly opposite effect, a sound so faint as hardly to be heard: “a worn whisper, dry and papery.” Maurice Thompson, in his *Sylvan Sketches*, gives in two words a sudden exact impression when he speaks of “the *wild hilarity* of a great laughing owl.”

Verbs are the most important words in sound description. The flute, in Hearn’s *Serenade*, “cooed and purred and moaned”; the mandolines “throbbed”; the horses’ harness mentioned by Hamlin Garland in *Up the Coolly* “creak-cracked”; Amy Lowell describes a wind-harp in a cedar grove which “grieves and whispers.” The screech-owl in Maurice Thompson’s *Fortnight in a Palace of Reeds* “begins to whine in tremulous, querulous falsetto,” while the big horned-owl “laughs and hoots far away in gloomy glens.”

Sometimes the most effective method of describing sound is to describe not the sound itself, but the effect which it has upon the hearer. It is significant that, in the great account in *Revelation* of the opening of the seven seals, the first six should have been accompanied by sound: the noise of thunder, the voices of the mighty beasts, the great earthquake; but at the opening of the supreme seal, “there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” So, too, in another Biblical account, filled with artistic as well as ethical meaning, God was not in the whirlwind nor in the fire, nor earthquake,

but in the still, small voice. Thus, occasionally, the finest descriptions of storms or battles or great music are those which make no attempt to describe the thing itself, but which describe the effect upon the listener. Amy Lowell in *The Bombardment* makes use of the reiterated sound, "Boom!" but the power of the sketch lies less in that repetition than in the pictures of the old lady, the child, the poet, and the scientist. Sidney Lanier, in the many letters that he wrote about orchestral performances, only occasionally attempts actual description of the music itself; sometimes he speaks of the effect of the music upon the audience, sometimes upon his own spirit; more often like Browning's Abt Vogler he reconstructs the pictures which flashed through his mind as he listened or played.

One of the most difficult of all sounds to describe is that of the human voice; many writers have attempted it; some few have succeeded fairly well; those have been most successful who have either described its effect upon the listeners—as do George Eliot in her account of Savonarola's sermon in *Romola* and Hawthorne in his description of the minister's voice in *The Scarlet Letter*; or those who, like Carlyle, have caught in one sentence the dominant quality of a voice; there is no better single sentence of sound description than that sentence of Carlyle's about Tennyson's voice: "musical metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail."

III

Description of the other senses—feeling, taste, and smell,—is much more difficult. In the first place, as has already been said, these senses, in most human beings, have degenerated because our civilization no longer needs

them as did primitive man; in the second place, they are associated with the utilitarian business of life; taste and smell come to be so much a matter of routine that we must decorate our tables, engage in conversation, or read, in order to elevate the operation of eating above the frankly material.

Among descriptions of feeling, those of extreme heat and extreme cold are most usual. Jack London, in his powerful story *To Build A Fire*, uses the killing cold of Alaska; with each sentence we approach surely and inevitably the conclusion. Heat, whether of the Illinois cornfield, the Sahara desert, or the tropics, may be used with equal effect. The modern poet "H. D." has made this study of the effect of heat in *Garden*:²

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into the heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat,
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

But there are many other kinds of feeling besides heat and cold which may be expressed descriptively. Frank Norris in a fine passage in *The Octopus* describes the combination of sense impressions which come to a man engaged in ploughing in one of the great western ranches:

² *Some Imagist Poems*: 1915. By permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Vanamee, in the midst of this steady confusion of constantly varying sensations . . . on this swaying, vibrating seat, quivering with the prolonged thrill of the earth, lapsed into a sort of pleasing numbness. . . . Underneath him was the jarring, jolting, trembling machine; not a clod was turned, not an obstacle encountered, that he did not receive the swift impression of it through his body, the very friction of the damp soil, sliding incessantly from the shining surface of the shears, seemed to reproduce itself in his finger-tips and along the back of his head.

Dickens, sensitive as he was to physical characteristics, frequently makes use of sense description, and never with greater effect than in his description of Uriah Heep, whose hands were as clammy as a dead fish. The same idea is used with very different effect by Galsworthy in *The Prisoner*. Hearn's unusual sketch *Frisson* gives his explanation of the varying effects which the touch of hands have upon different individuals.

Very different from these descriptions of feeling is the passage in Hearn's *Chita* which describes the sensation of swimming in the waters of the gulf where "sand and sea teem with vitality" and where the chance swimmer may encounter sensations for which he has no name; or Christopher Morley's account of the unusual experience of ringing the bells of Chartres. Still another sort of description of feeling is that of nightmare, as in Hearn's *Vespertina Cognitio*; or the continued sense of impending doom, of which Poe is a master.

The sensations of smell and taste, although used infrequently in writing, are far from being devoid of æsthetic appeal. Here, as in sound description, a dictionary of synonyms will suggest the gradations of sensation we may express if we will. The very names of fragrant objects suggest poems: frankincense, myrrh, balm, attar, the perfumes of Arabia; adjectives of odor, pleasant and unpleasant, are numerous: aromatic, fra-

grant, spicy, ambrosial, redolent; noisome, rank, musty, putrid, suffocating. "To the boy Henry Adams," writes Adams in his autobiography, "summer was drunken. Among senses, smell was the strongest—smell of hot pine-woods and sweet-fern in the scorching summer noon; of new-mown hay; of ploughed earth; of box hedges; of peaches, lilacs, syringas; of stables, barns, cow-yards; of salt water, low tide on the marshes; nothing came amiss." Kenneth Grahame, suggests, however, in a passage in his *Golden Age* that childhood does have pleasure in more subtle and delicate odors: "The faint odor of orris-root," he says in his description of the youngster hunting for a secret drawer in an old bureau, "that floated forth as I let down the flap seemed to identify itself with the yellows and browns of the old wood, till hue and scent were of one quality and interchangeable. Even so, ere this, the pot-pourri had mixed itself with the tints of the old brocade, and brocade and pot-pourri had long been one."

William Beebe in *Jungle Peace* declares that when he was in the jungle and realized not only the value of the sense of smell, but also his real delight in it, he pondered much over the effect that civilization has had upon that sense. "The odors of the city," he says, "seemed very far away: gasoline, paint, smoke, perfumery, leather—all these could hardly be recalled, and how absurd seemed society's unwritten taboo on discussions of this admirable but pitifully degenerate sense. Why may you look at your friend's books, touch his collection of *netsukés*, listen to his music, yet dare sniff at naught but his blossoms?" That William Beebe himself had a discriminating sense of smell, any one of his books will prove; in the one section of *Jungle Peace* in which he describes his wait for the giant armadillo, he refers to a "violent,

acid smell," a "delectable fragrance," a "stinging bitter taint," "wavering whiffs of orchids," "pungence of carrion," and an odor, "acid, sweet, spicy, and suffocating." David Grayson in *Adventures in Contentment* distinguishes the "cloying, sweet fragrance of wild crab-apple blossoms, almost tropical in their richness," and the "thin, acid smell of the marsh." Upton Sinclair characterizes the smell of the stockyards as "an elemental odor, raw and crude; it was rich, almost rancid, sensual and strong."

In spite of the fact that we are all constantly aware of our sense of taste, there are few direct descriptions of the sense in literature. Maurice Thompson does, indeed, attempt to put into words the actual taste of various fruits and nuts, when he describes the flavor of the paw-paw as "rank and savage"; he says that he found the taste of the innermost part of the bark of the oak "slightly mucilaginous and faintly sweet." The failure of most writers to describe taste more exactly is not the result of poverty of vocabulary, for we have dozens of such words as: pungent, racy, savory, sharp, stinging, ambrosial, dulcet, luscious; crabbed, flat, insipid; stale, repulsive, nauseous. Taste, being utilitarian and closely connected with the physical need of preservation of life, is most artistically described by indirect means—by the effect upon the person concerned, or by the appearance of the object. Who has not, on a hot summer's days, remembered Keats' "beaded bubbles winking at the brim," or longed in winter to taste, "those dainty pies of venison, O generous food"! Probably the most provocative of all taste descriptions is that of the feast prepared by the lover in Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes* for his lady; here Keats has gained his effect in the surest of ways—by connotations. Not only are the dainties piled in golden and

silver dishes, but they carry with them the associations of a magical world, the world of "argosies from Fez," of "silken Samarcand" and "cedared Lebanon." Milton, in his account of the feast prepared for Raphael in the Garden of Eden uses the same device. His evocation of the great banquets of the past—of Alcinoüs, of the gods on Olympus, as Keats' of Robin Hood and the Mermaid Tavern—lends æsthetic connotation to what might be otherwise mere sensual description. Foreign or unusual names often produce the same impression—hence the tendency of restaurants to glorify American food with French names! Christopher Morley in *Little Italy* is instructed by the Epicure into the mysteries of "gnocchi, frittura mista, rognone, scallopini al marsala," and sees in the windows "Funghi secchi della Liguria . . . and Finocchio uso Sicilia . . . whose names are poems in themselves." So, too, it is often the appearance of food, rather than the food itself, which attracts us. We remember the appearance of that fruit arranged by Katherine Mansfield's character in *Bliss*. The most attractive article of food in Morley's description of Little Italy is undoubtedly the fish—"small, flattened, silver-shining things . . . packed cunningly in kegs in a curious concentric pattern so that the glitter of their perished eyes gleams in hypnotizing circles."

SIGHT

LA RICCIA

It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct, lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But

as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano and graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber, the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep, palpitating azure, half æther and half dew. The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it color, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the grey walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every blade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen,—casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the

too
precisely

stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.

CLOUDS

Shelley's poem

Stand upon the peak of some isolated mountain at day-break, when the night mists first rise from off the plains, and watch their white and lake-like fields as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch them when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away; and down under their depths, the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their gray shadows upon the plain. . . . Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they couch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light, upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back and back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very gases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below. . . . Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the

promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher into the sky, and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapors, which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their gray network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves together, and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lucid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices as a hawk pauses over his prey. . . . And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapor swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes, or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go. And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white, torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapor, now gone, now gathered again; while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about it with blood. . . . And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills, brighter—brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds, step by step, line by

line; star after star she quenches with her burning light, setting in their stead an army of pale penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. . . . And then wait yet for an hour, until the east again becomes purple, and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of an angry sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire; watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams, brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted clouds, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven—one scarlet canopy—is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels; and then, when you can look no more for gladness, and when you are bowed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men!

John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.

SUNRISE AT PORT-OF-SPAIN

. . . Sunrise: a morning of supernal beauty,—the sky of a fairy tale, the sea of a love-poem.

Under a heaven of exquisitely tender blue, the whole smooth sea has a perfect luminous dove-color, the horizon being filled to a great height with greenish-golden haze,—a mist of unspeakably sweet tint, a hue that, imitated in any aquarelle, would be cried out against as an impossibility. As yet the hills are nearly all gray, the forests also inwrapping them are gray and ghostly, for the sun has but just risen above them, and vapors hang like a veil between. Then, over the glassy level of the flood, bands of purple and violet and pale blue and fluid gold begin to shoot and quiver and broaden; these are the currents of the morning, catching varying color with the deepening of the day and the lifting of the tide.

Then, as the sun rises higher, green masses begin to glimmer among the grays; the outlines of the forest summits commence to define themselves through the vapory light, to left and right of the great glow. Only the city still remains invisible; it lies exactly between us and the downpour of solar splendor, and the mists there have caught such radiance that the place seems hidden by a fog of fire. Gradually the gold-green of the horizon changes to a pure yellow; the hills take soft, rich, sensuous colors. One of the more remote has turned a marvellous tone,—a seemingly diaphanous aureate color, the very ghost of gold. But at last all of them sharpen bluely, show bright folds and ribbings of green through their haze. The valleys remain awhile clouded, as if filled with something like blue smoke; but the projecting masses of cliff and slope swiftly change their misty green to a warmer hue. All these tints and colors have a spectral charm, a preternatural loveliness; everything seems subdued, softened, semi-vaporized,—the only very sharply defined silhouettes being those of the little be-

calmed ships sprinkling the western water, all spreading colored wings to catch the morning breeze.

The more the sun ascends, the more rapid the development of the landscape out of vapory blue; the hills all become green-faced, reveal the details of frondage. The wind fills the waiting sails—white, red, yellow—ripples the water, and turns it green. Little fish begin to leap; they spring and fall in glittering showers like opalescent blown spray. And at last, through the fading vapor, dew-glittering red-tiled roofs reveal themselves: the city is unveiled.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies*. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

ON FUJI-NO-YAMA

Tired as I am, I cannot but limp to the doorway to contemplate the amazing prospect. From within a few feet of the threshold, the ghastly slope of rocks and cinders drops down into a prodigious disk of clouds miles beneath us,—clouds of countless forms, but mostly wreathings and fluffy pilings;—and the whole huddling mass, reaching almost to the horizon, is blinding white under the sun. (By the Japanese, this tremendous cloud-expanse is well named *Wata-no-Umi*, “the Sea of Cotton.”) The horizon itself—enormously risen, phantasmally expanded—seems half-way up above the world: a wide luminous belt ringing the hollow vision. Hollow, I call it, because extreme distances below the sky-line are sky-colored and vague,—so that the impression you receive is not of being on a point under a vault, but of being upon a point rising into a stupendous blue sphere, of which this huge horizon would represent an equatorial Zone. To turn away from such a spectacle is not pos-

sible. I watch and watch until the dropping sun changes the colors,—turning the Sea of Cotton into a Fleece of Gold. Half-round the horizon a yellow glory grows and burns. Here and there beneath it, through cloudrifts, colored vaguenesses define: I now see golden water, with long purple head-lands reaching into it, with ranges of violet peaks thronging behind it;—these glimpses curiously resembling portions of a tinted topographical map. Yet most of the landscape is pure delusion. Even my guides, with their long experience and their eagle-sight, can scarcely distinguish the real from the unreal;—for the blue and purple and violet clouds moving under the Golden Fleece, exactly mock the outlines and the tones of distant peaks and capes: you can detect what is vapor only by its slowly shifting shape. . . . Brighter and brighter glows the gold. Shadows come from the west,—shadows flung by cloud-pile over cloud-pile; and these, like evening shadows upon snow, are violaceous blue. . . . Then orange-tones appear in the horizon; then smouldering crimson. And now the greater part of the Fleece of Gold has changed to cotton again,—white cotton mixed with pink. . . . Stars thrill out. The cloud-waste uniformly whitens;—thickening and packing to the horizon. The west glooms. Night rises; and all things darken except that wondrous unbroken world-round of white,—the Sea of Cotton.

The station-keeper lights his lamps, kindles a fire of twigs, prepares our beds. Outside it is bitterly cold, and, with the fall of night, becoming colder. Still I cannot turn away from that astounding vision. . . . Countless stars now flicker and shiver in the blue-black sky. Nothing whatever of the material world remains visible, except the black slope of the peak before my feet. The enormous cloud-disk below continues white; but to all

appearance it has become a liquidly level white, without forms,—a white flood. It is no longer the Sea of Cotton. It is a Sea of Milk, the Cosmic Sea of ancient Indian legend,—and always self-luminous, as with ghostly quickenings.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Exotics and Retrospectives*.
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& Company.

THE INFINITE BLUE

The charm of a single summer day on these island shores is something impossible to express, never to be forgotten. Rarely, in the paler zones, do earth and heaven take such luminosity: those will best understand me who have seen the splendor of a West Indian sky. And yet there is a tenderness of tint, a caress of color, in these Gulf-days which is not of the Antilles,—a spirituality, as of eternal tropical spring. It must have been to even such a sky that Xenophanes lifted up his eyes of old when he vowed the Infinite Blue was God;—it was indeed under such a sky that De Soto named the vastest and grandest of Southern havens Espiritu Santo,—the Bay of the Holy Ghost. There is something unutterable in this bright Gulf-air that compels awe,—something vital, something holy, something pantheistic: and reverentially the mind asks itself if what the eye beholds is not the *Pneuma* indeed, the Infinite Breath, the Divine Ghost, the great Blue Soul of the Unknown. All, all is blue in the calm,—save the low land under your feet, which you almost forget, since it seems only as a tiny green flake afloat in the liquid eternity of day. Then slowly, caressingly, irresistibly, the witchery of the Infinite grows upon you: out of Time and Space you begin

to dream with open eyes,—to drift into delicious oblivion of facts,—to forget the past, the present, the substantial,—to comprehend nothing but the existence of that infinite Blue Ghost as something into which you would wish to melt utterly away forever. . . .

And this day-magic of azure endures sometimes for months together. Cloudlessly the dawn reddens up through a violet east: there is no speck upon the blossoming of its Mystical Rose,—unless it be the silhouette of some passing gull, whirling his sickle-wings against the crimsoning. Ever, as the sun floats higher, the flood shifts its color. Sometimes smooth and gray, yet flickering with the morning gold, it is the vision of John,—the apocalyptic Sea of Glass mixed with fire;—again, with the growing breeze, it takes that incredible purple tint familiar mostly to painters of West Indian scenery;—once more, under the blaze of noon, it changes to a waste of broken emerald. With evening, the horizon assumes tints of inexpressible sweetness,—pearl-lights, opaline colors of milk and fire; and in the west are topaz-glowings and wondrous flushings as of nacre. Then, if the sea sleeps, it dreams of all these,—faintly, weirdly,—shadowing them even to the verge of heaven.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita*. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

IN VANISHED LIGHT

. . . A bright long narrow street rising toward a far mass of glowing green—burning green of lianas: the front of a tropic wood, Not a street of this age, but of the seventeenth century: a street of yellow façades, with yellow garden-walls between the façades. In sharp bursts of blue light the sea appears at intervals,—blue

light blazing up old, old flights of mossy steps descending to the bay. And through these openings ships are visible, far below, riding in azure.

Walls are lemon-colour;—quaint balconies and lattices are green. Palm-trees rise from courts and gardens into a warm blue sky—indescribably blue—that appears almost to touch the feathery heads of them. And all things, within or without the yellow vista, are steeped in a sunshine electrically white,—in a radiance so powerful that it lends even to the pavements of basalt the glitter of silver ore.

Men wearing only white canvas trousers, and immense hats of bamboo-grass,—men naked to the waist, and muscled like sculptures,—pass noiselessly with barefoot stride. Some are very black; others are of strange and beautiful colours; there are skins of gold, of brown bronze, and of ruddy bronze. And women pass in robes of brilliant hue,—women of the colour of fruit: orange-colour, banana-colour,—women wearing turbans banded with just such burning yellow as bars the belly of a wasp. The warm thick air is sweet with scents of sugar and of cinnamon,—with odours of mangoes and of custard-apples, of guava-jelly, and of fresh cocoanut milk.

—Into the amber shadow and cool moist breath of a great archway I plunge, to reach a court filled with flickering emerald and the chirrup of leaping water. There a little boy and a little girl run to meet me, with Creole cries of, “Mi y!” Each takes one of my hands;—each holds up a beautiful brown cheek to kiss. In the same moment a voice, the father’s voice—deep and vibrant as the tone of a great bell—calls from an inner doorway, “*Entrez donc, mon ami!*” And with the large caress of that voice there comes to me such joy of sympathy, such sense of perfect peace, as Souls long-tried by

fire might feel when passing the Gateway of Pearl. . . .

But all this was—and is not! . . . Never again will sun or moon shine upon the streets of that city;—never again will its ways be trodden;—never again will its gardens blossom . . . except in dreams.

The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, edited by Elizabeth Bisland. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

MIDDAY ON THE RED SEA

It is midday on the Red Sea. There is light, light everywhere, so much light that cries of admiration and astonishment are forced from us; it is as if we issue from gloom into a clear air of boundless space. The passage from our Northern Autumn to the perpetual Summer that reigns here, is made almost imperceptibly by our modern ships that do not heed the wind. Silvery crested waves dance on the blue waters, and the sky seems more distant from the earth; the clouds, too, have more definite form and are further off; new depths of space become apparent, and our horizon is extended.

It seems as though our eyes could appreciate new forms and colours in the increasing brightness which we have been unable to perceive before. From what a land of shadows we must have come, and what can this festival of light be that has sprung on us suddenly and unbidden?

A melancholy brightness pours relentlessly on this land of tombs, this country thick with dust of by-gone races; but we forget it when we reach our northern clime, and are surprised to find it there once more on our return. Its rays shine constantly on the hot and languid gulfs, and on their sand or granite shores; it bathes the ruins

and that world of dead stones which guard the ancestral faith and the secrets of those the Bible tells us of. This melancholy light is ever present, just as it must have been in the old, sacred times, and these things give our narrow imagination a sense of infinity, and tell of a time without beginning or end. The biblical times, however, whose antiquity inspires our trust, are but of yesterday when we look back on the history of the world, fearful in the immensity of the past. This superb and intoxicating brightness is but the passing effect of our slowly decaying little sun upon a favored zone of our still smaller earth, an earth that nestles close to him, as if frightened by the vast and chill orbits of the other planets.

. . . The day declines in wondrous splendour. The sun that draws us to him in the madness of his eternal wandering will soon have passed from our view. Our side of the world will turn toward that deep space, toward that land of shadow which the transparencies of the night air will let us see more clearly. But now the magic of the evening, with the burning rays of coppery rose, steals on us. In the east a chain of desolate mountains, whose granite slopes glow like a furnace, rise from the sea. They are Sinai, Serbal, and Horeb, and the feeling of religious respect, which centuries have impressed upon our race, invades us once more.

The burning summits do not linger long, for the sun has sunk beneath the waters and the evening enchantment is over. Sinai, Serbal, and Horeb fade in the twilight, and are no longer distinguishable. Were they other than crests of jagged rock, idealized in our minds by the superb poetry of Exodus? Vast and calm night will soon restore all things in their true proportions, for space is already filled by legions of wandering suns which make me think of the black emptiness into which they and we are falling.

I dream, too, of the miserable fate of our little planets chained to a sun that they can never hope to reach, ever attempting to narrow the orbits of their mad circlings, instead of plunging into space as do the more glorious suns.

A cloudless limpidity spreads from the zenith to the horizon, and the limitless void into which myriads of worlds fall (like sparks from a rain of fire) is unbared before our eyes.

A sense of alleviation comes from the starry night, like some breath of tenderness or pity that is poured into a pardoned soul.

Pierre Loti, *India*, translated by George A. F. Inman. By permission of the publishers, T. Werner Laurie, Ltd.

THE LAST OF THE SHIP

But we did not make a start at once. We must see the last of the ship. And so the boats drifted about that night, heaving and setting on the swell. The men dozed, waked, sighed, groaned. I looked at the burning ship.

Between the darkness of earth and heaven she was burning fiercely upon a disc of purple sea shot by the blood-red play of gleams; upon a disc of water glittering and sinister. A high, clear flame, an immense and lonely flame, ascended from the ocean, and from its summit the black smoke poured continuously at the sky. She burned furiously, mournful and imposing like a funeral pile kindled in the night, surrounded by the sea, watched over by the stars. A magnificent death had come like a grace, like a gift, like a reward to that old ship at the end of her laborious days. The surrender of her weary ghost to the keeping of stars and sea was stirring like the sight of a glorious triumph. The masts fell just before

daybreak, and for a moment there was a burst and turmoil of sparks that seemed to fill with flying fire the night patient and watchful, the vast night lying silent upon the sea. At daylight she was only a charred shell, floating still under a cloud of smoke and bearing a glowing mass of coal within.

Then the oars were got out, and the boats forming in a line moved round her remains as if in procession—the long-boat leading. As we pulled across her stern a slim dart of fire shot out viciously at us, and suddenly she went down, head first, in a great hiss of steam. The unconsumed stern was the last to sink; but the paint had gone, had cracked, had peeled off, and there were no letters, there was no word, no stubborn device that was like her soul, to flash at the rising sun her creed and her name.

From *Youth*, by Joseph Conrad. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Page & Co.

SOUND

A CHINESE GONG

By the by, did you ever hear a *real* Chinese gong? I don't mean a d—d hotel gong, but one of those great moon-disks of yellow metal which have so terrible a power of utterance. A gentleman in Bangor, North Wales, who had a private museum of South Pacific and Chinese curiosities, exhibited one to me. It was hanging amidst Fiji spears beautifully barbed with shark's teeth, which, together with grotesque New Zealand clubs of green stone, and Sandwich Island paddles wrought with the baroque visages of the Shark-God, were depending from the walls. Also there were Indian elephants in

ivory, carrying balls in their carven bellies, each ball containing many other balls inside it. The gong glimmered pale and huge and yellow, like the moon rising over a southern swamp. My friend tapped its ancient face with a muffled drum-stick, and it commenced to sob, like waves upon a low beach. He tapped it again and it moaned like the wind in a mighty forest of pines. Again, and it commenced to roar, and with each tap the roar grew deeper and deeper, till it seemed like thunder rolling over an abyss in the Cordilleras, or the crashing of Thor's chariot wheels. It was awful, and astonishing as awful. I assure you I did not laugh at it at all. It impressed me as something terrible and mysterious. I vainly sought to understand how that thin, thin disk of trembling metal could produce so frightful a vibration.

The Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, edited by Elizabeth Bisland. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

A SERENADE

"Broken" were too abrupt a word. My sleep was not broken, but suddenly melted and swept away by a flow of music from the night without,—music that filled me with expectant ecstasy by the very first gush of its sweetness: a serenade,—a playing of flutes and mandolines.

The flutes had dove-tones; and they cooed and moaned and purled;—and the mandolines throbbed through the liquid plaint of them, like a beating of hearts. The players I could not see: they were standing in heavy shadows flung into the street by a tropical moon,—shadows of plantain and of tamarind.

Nothing in all the violet gloom moved but that music,

and the fire-flies,—great bright slow sparks of orange and of emerald. The warm air held its breath; the plumes of the palms were still; and the haunting circle of the sea, blue even beneath the moon, lay soundless as a circle of vapor. . . .

That tremulous sweetness was never masculine; that passionless sadness never was of man;—unisexual both and inseparably blended into a single miracle of tone-beauty. Echoing far into the mystery of my own past, the enchantment of that tone had startled from their sleep of ages countless buried loves, and set the whole delicate swarm fluttering in some delicious filmy agony of revival,—set them streaming and palpitating through the Night of Time,—like those myriads eddying forever through the gloom of the vision of Dante.

They died with the music and the moon,—but not utterly. Whenever in dream the memory of that melody returns, again I feel the long soft shuddering of the dead,—again I feel the faint wings spread and thrill, responsive to the cooing of those spectral flutes, to the throbbing of those shadowy mandolines. And the elfish ecstasy of their thronging awakes me; but always with my waking the delight passes, and in the dark the sadness only lingers,—unutterable,—infinite. . . !

Lafcadio Hearn, *Exotics and Retrospectives*.
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& Company.

MUSIC

And to-night I come out of what might have been heaven. . . .

'Twas opening night of Theo. Thomas' orchestra at Central Park Garden, and I could not resist the temptation to go in and bathe in the sweet amber seas of the

music of this fine orchestra, and so I went, and tugged me through a vast crowd, and, after standing some while, found a seat, and the *bâton* tapped and waved, and I plunged into the sea, and lay and floated. Ah! the dear flutes and oboes and horns drifted me hither and thither, and the great violins and small violins swayed me upon waves, and overflowed me with strong lavations, and sprinkled glistening foam in my face, and in among the clarinetti, as among waving water-lilies with flexile stems, I pushed my easy way, and so, even lying in the music-waters, I floated and flowed, my soul utterly bent and prostrate. . . .

Then the "Hunt of Henry IV!" . . . It openeth with a grave and courteous invitation, as of a cavalier riding by some dainty lady, through the green aisles of the deep woods, to the hunt—a lovely, romantic melody, the first violin discoursing the man's words, the first flute replying for the lady. Presently a fanfare; a sweet horn replies out of the far woods; then the meeting of the gay cavaliers; then the start, the dogs are unleashed, one hound gives tongue, another joins, the stag is seen—hey, gentlemen! away they all fly through the sweet leaves, by the great oaks and beeches, all a-dash among the brambles, till presently, bang! goeth a pistol (it was my veritable old revolver loaded with blank cartridges for the occasion, the revolver that hath lain so many nights under my head), fired by *Tympani* (as we call him, the same being a nervous little Frenchman who playeth our drums,) and then the stag dieth in a celestial concord of flutes, oboes, and violins. Oh, how far off my soul was in that thrilling moment! It was in a rare, sweet glen in Tennessee, the sun was rising over a wilderness of mountains. I was standing (how well I remember the spot!) alone in the

dewy grass, wild with rapture and with expectation,—yonder came, gracefully walking, a lovely fawn. I looked into its liquid eyes, hesitated, prayed, gulped a sigh, then overcome with the savage hunter's instinct, fired; the fawn leaped convulsively a few yards, I ran to it, found it lying on its side, and received into my agonized and remorseful heart the reproaches of its most tender, dying gaze. But luckily I had not the right to linger over this sad scene; the conductor's *bâton* shook away the dying pause; on all sides shouts and fanfares and gallopings "to the death," to which the first flute had to reply in time, recalled me to my work. . . .

The Letters of Sidney Lanier. Copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

THE BAGPIPES

I must have slept for an hour or nearer two . . . when I suddenly sat bolt upright, with every tingling nerve straining as if to catch something which had, but that very moment, eluded me. I was yet wondering what this could be, when, from somewhere close outside the cottage, there rose a sudden cry—hideous and appalling—a long-drawn-out, bubbling scream (no other words can describe it) that died slowly down to a wail only to rise again higher and higher, till it seemed to pierce my very brain. Then all at once it was gone, and silence rushed in upon me—a silence fraught with fear and horror unimaginable.

I lay rigid, the blood in my veins jumping with every throb of my heart till it seemed to shake me from head to foot. And then the cry began again, deep and hoarse

at first, but rising, rising, until the air thrilled with a scream such as no earthly lips could utter. . . .

Then, all at once, from drones and chanters, there rushed forth such a flood of melody as seemed to sweep me away upon its tide.

First, I seemed to hear a roar of wind through desolate glens, a moan of trees, and a rush of sounding waters; yet softly, softly, there rises above the flood of sound a little rippling melody which comes, and goes, and comes again, growing ever sweeter with repetition. And now the roar of wind is changed to the swing of marching feet, the tread of a mighty host whose step is strong and free; and lo! they are singing, as they march, and the song is bold, and wild, wild, wild. Again and again, beneath the song, beneath the rhythm of marching feet, the melody rises, very sweet but infinitely sad, like a silver pipe or an angel's voice tremulous with tears. Once again the theme changes, and it is battle, and death, sudden and sharp; there is the rush and shock of charging ranks, and the surge and tumult of conflict, above whose thunder, loud and clear and shrill, like some battle-cry, the melody swells, one moment triumphant, and the next lost again.

But the thunder rolls away, distant and more distant—the day is lost, and won, but, sudden and clear, the melody rings out once more, fuller now, richer, and complete; the silver pipe has become a golden trumpet. And yet, what sorrow, what anguish unspeakable, rings through it, the weeping and wailing of a nation! So the melody sinks slowly, to die away in one long-drawn minor note.

Jeffery Farnol, *The Broad Highway*. By permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

THE BAGPIPES

The bagpipes are a good thing in their place, but their place is with Dante and his *Inferno*. . . .

I smiled as he fondled his windy octopus, which he did with mysterious tenderness. Then he adjusted the creature to his lips, while I calmly braced myself for the gathering storm. I had not long to wait. He paced dramatically back and forward for a moment in a preliminary sort of way, like one who pushes his shallop from the shore, gently pressing the huge belly of the thing with his elbow as if to prompt it for the ensuing fray. The thing emitted one or two sample sounds, not odious particularly, but infantile and grimly prophetic, like the initial squeaks of some windful babe awaking from its sleep. Then the thing seemed to feel its strength, to recognize its dark enfranchisement, and broke into such a blasphemy of sound as hath not been heard since the angels alighted where they fell.

I have heard the deep roar of the ocean, and have listened to the screech of the typhoon through befuddled sails; I have shuddered at the savage yell of the hyena, and have grown cold, even in the tropics, before the tooting of the wounded elephant; I have heard the eagle rend the firmament, and the midnight fog-horn ring the changes on eternity—join them all together, and they will be still but as a village choir compared to the infinite and full-orbed bray of the highland bagpipes.

R. E. Knowles, *St. Cuthbert's*. By permission
of Fleming H. Revell Company.

BIRD SONG

The most difficult question in our investigation arises out of the unmusical notes—the quacks, croaks, jarring

cries, and cackling noises made by the birds when not inclined to whistle. If, on one hand, a pure flute note cannot be made by the vibration of the minute syringeal membranes of a mocking-bird, it would appear, on the other hand, that a hoarse, guttural, rasping snarl could not be originated by a whistling orifice, or, in other words, by the glottis of a mocking-bird, a crow, or a meadow-lark; but a little attention will clear up the trouble. When we are very near the crow, for instance, his voice divides itself into two distinct sounds, one a clear, steady wind-note, the other a jarring noise, harsh and disagreeable. The effect is the well-known caw, sometimes successfully imitated by a boy making a nasal sound in his hollowed hands. The jarring or rasping element of the crow's voice is really caused by the vibration of a membrane, but it is not a syringeal membrane. The note first made by the breath from the glottis is reflected back by the bird's lifted tongue, and the element of harshness is caught from the strained and vibratory membranes of the mouth and the nasal and throat cavities. . . .

Maurice Thompson, *Sylvan Sketches*.

NIGHT SOUNDS

When the nights were clear, we hung our hammocks in the palace, and slept suspended in the perfumed breeze. Often I awoke in the small hours and heard the raccoons growling and chattering in the brake. At such times the swash of the river had a strangely soothing effect, a lullaby of fairy land.

Will had a nocturnal habit. He would slip forth, when the moon shone, long after I had gone to sleep, and the twang of his bowstring would startle me from quiet

dreams as he let go a shaft at an owl or a night heron. Reading over some of the notes I made at the time recalls the charmingly unique effect of certain sounds heard at waking moments in those out-door resting-hours.

The leaping of bass, for instance, plash, plash, at unequal intervals of time and distance, breaking through the supreme quiet of midnight, comes to one's ears with a liquid, bubbling accompaniment, not at all like anything else in the world. The mocking bird (*Mimus polyglottus*) often starts from sleep in the scented foliage of the sweet-gum to sing a tender medley to the rising moon. At such times his voice reflects all the richness and shadowy dreamfulness of night. It blends into one's sense of rest and becomes an element of enjoyment after one has fallen again into slumber.

Frogs are night's buffoons. "Croak, croak, croak," you hear one muttering, and with your eyes yet unopened and the silence and stillness of sleep scarcely gone from you, you wonder where he is sitting. On what green tussock with his big eyes jetting out and his angular legs akimbo, does he squat? Suddenly, "Chug!" You know how he leaped up, spread out his limbs, turned down his head and struck into the water like a shot. You chuckle grimly to yourself, turn over in your hammock, and all is forgotten.

Then the screech-owl begins to whine in its tremulous, querulous falsetto, snapping its beak occasionally as if to remind the mice and small birds of its murderous desires. The big horned-owl laughs and hoots far away in gloomy glens. The leaves rustle, the river pours on, and the wind sinks and swells like the breath of a mighty sleeper. . . . Perfumes, too, affect one strangely, on waking, in the depth of night. There is a certain decayed wood in the Southern forests which at times gives forth

a delicate, far-reaching aroma. This, together with the occasional wafts of sweet-gum odor and the peculiarly sharp smell of pine resin, steals through the woodland ways and touches the sleeper's senses until he slowly awakes. Drowsily he lies, with his eyes lightly closed, noting the tender shades of sweetness as they come and go. But the falling of a light shower of rain, one of those light, short, even downcomings of large drops, which is not strong enough to break through the leaf-canopy overhead, moves the out-door slumberer to most exquisite enjoyment. He opens his eyes and all his senses at once. The air has sweet moisture in it, the darkness is deep. Above, around, far, and near, a tumult is in the leaves. The shower is scarcely more than momentary in its duration, but it is infinitely suggestive. There are millions of voices calling from far and near. Vast organ swells, tender æolian strains, the thrumming of harp-strings and the exquisite quaverings of the violin. Multitudes clapping hands and crying from afar in applause. Then as the cloud passes on, the throbbing sounds trail after it, and at length it all dies out beyond the hills.

Maurice Thompson, *By-Ways and Bird Notes*.

THE SOUND OF SUMMER

Besides the singing and calling, there is a peculiar sound which is only heard in summer. Waiting quietly to discover what birds are about, I become aware of a sound in the very air. It is not the midsummer hum which will soon be heard over the heated hay in the valley, and over the cooler hills alike. It is not enough to be called a hum, and does but just tremble at the extreme edge of hearing. If the branches wave and rustle,

they overhear it; the buzz of a passing bee is so much louder it overcomes all of it that is in the whole field. I cannot define it except by calling the hours of winter to mind—they are silent; you hear a branch crack or creak as it rubs another in the wood, you hear the hoar frost crunch on the grass beneath your feet, but the air is without sound in itself. The sound of summer is everywhere—in the passing breeze, in the hedge, in the broad-branching trees, in the grass as it swings; all the myriad particles that together make the summer are in motion. The sap moves in the trees, the pollen is pushed out from grass and flower, and yet again these acres and acres of leaves and square miles of grass blades—for they would cover acres and square miles if reckoned edge to edge—are drawing their strength from the atmosphere. Exceedingly minute as these vibrations must be, their numbers perhaps give them a volume almost reaching in the aggregate to the power of the ear. Besides the quivering leaf, the swinging grass, the fluttering bird's wing, and the thousand oval membranes which innumerable insects whirl about, a faint resonance seems to come from the very earth itself. The fervor of the sunbeams descending in a tidal flood rings on the strung harp of the earth. It is this exquisite undertone, heard and yet unheard, which brings the mind into sweet accord with the wonderful instrument of nature.

Richard Jefferies, *The Pageant of Summer*.

NIGHT NOISES.

It might reasonably have been supposed that she was listening to the wind, which rose somewhat as the night

advanced, and laid hold of the attention. The wind, indeed, seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour. Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else. Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the north-west, and when each of them had raced past the sound of its progress resolved into three. Treble, tenor, and bass notes were to be found therein. The general ricochet of the whole over pits and prominences had the gravest pitch of the chime. Next there could be heard the baritone buzz of a holly tree. Below these in force, above them in pitch, a dwindled voice strove hard at a husky tune, which was the peculiar local sound alluded to. Thinner and less immediately traceable than the other two, it was far more impressive than either. In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath; and being audible nowhere on earth off a heath, it afforded a shadow of reason for the woman's tenseness, which continued as unbroken as ever.

Throughout the blowing of these plaintive November winds, that note bore a great resemblance to the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore and ten. It was a worn whisper, dry and papery, and it brushed so distinctly across the ear that, by the accustomed, the material minutiae in which it originated could be realized as by touch. It was the united products of infinitesimal vegetable causes, and these were neither stems, leaves, fruit, blades, prickles, lichen, nor moss.

They were the mummied heath-bells of the past summer, originally tender and purple, now washed colourless by Michaelmas rains, and dried to dead skins by October suns. So low was an individual sound from these that a combination of hundreds only just emerged from silence,

and the myriads of the whole declivity reached the woman's ear but as a shrivelled and intermittent recitative.

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*.

SMELL AND TASTE

ODORS OF MORNING

Of all the hours of the day there is none like the early morning for downright good odors—the morning before eating. Fresh from sleep and unclogged with food a man's senses cut like knives. The whole world comes in upon him. A still morning is best, for the mists and the moisture seem to retain the odors which they have distilled through the night. Upon a breezy morning one is likely to get a single predominant odor as of clover when the wind blows across a hay field or of apple blossoms when the wind comes through the orchard, but upon a perfectly still morning, it is wonderful how the odors arrange themselves in upright strata, so that one walking passes through them as from room to room in a marvelous temple of fragrance. . . .

So it was this morning. As I walked along the margin of my field I was conscious, at first, coming within the shadows of the wood, of the cool, heavy aroma which one associates with the night as of moist woods and earth mould. The penetrating scent of the night remains long after the sights and sounds of it have disappeared. In sunny spots I had the fragrance of the open cornfield, the aromatic breath of the brown earth, giving curiously the sense of fecundity—a warm, generous odor of daylight and sunshine. Down the field, toward the corner, cutting in sharply as though a door opened (or a page turned to another lyric), came the cloying, sweet fra-

grance of wild crab-apple blossoms, almost tropical in their richness, and below that, as I came to my work, the thin acrid smell of the marsh, the place of the rushes and the frogs.

From *Adventures in Contentment*, by David Grayson. Published by Doubleday, Page and Co. Used by permission.

ODORS OF THE JUNGLE

Then silence descended again, and hours passed in our search for sound or smell of the animal we wished chiefest to find—the giant armadillo. These rare beings have a distinct odor. Months of work in the open had sharpened my nostrils so that on such a tramp as this they were not much inferior to those of Nupee. This sense gave me as keen pleasure as eye or ear, and furnished quite as much information. The odors of city and civilization seemed very far away: gasoline, paint, smoke, perfumery, leather—all these could hardly be recalled. And how absurd seemed society's unwritten taboo on discussion of this admirable but pitifully degenerate sense! Why may you look at your friend's books, touch his collection of *netsukés*, listen to his music, yet dare sniff at naught but his blossoms!

In the open spaces of the earth, and more than anywhere in this conservatory of unblown odors, we come more and more to appreciate and envy a dog's sensitive muzzle. Here we sniffed as naturally as we turned ear, and were able to recognize many of our nasal impressions, and even to follow a particularly strong scent to its source. Few yards of trail but had their distinguishable scent, whether violent, acrid smell or delectable fragrance. Long after a crab-jackal had passed, we noted the stinging, bitter taint in the air; and now and then the

pungent wake of some big jungle-bug struck us like a tangible barrier.

The most tantalizing odors were the wonderfully delicate and penetrating ones from some great burst of blossoms, odors heavy with sweetness, which seeped down from vine or tree high overhead, wholly invisible from below even in broad daylight. These odors remained longest in memory, perhaps because they were so completely the product of a single sense. There were others, too, which were unforgettable, because, like the voice of the frog, they stirred the memory a fraction before they excited curiosity. Such I found the powerful musk from the bed of leaves which a fawn had just left. For some reason this brought vividly to mind the fearful compound of smells arising from the decks of Chinese junks.

Along the moonlit trail there came wavering whiffs of orchids, ranging from attar of roses and carnations to the pungence of carrion, the latter doubtless distilled from as delicate and as beautiful blossoms as the former. There were, besides, the myriad and bewildering smells of sap, crushed leaves, and decaying wood, acrid, sweet, spicy and suffocating, some like musty books, others recalling the paint on the Noah's Ark of one's nursery.

But the scent of the giant armadillo eluded us. When we waded through some new, strange odor, I looked back at Nupee, hoping for some sign that it was the one we sought. But that night the great armored creatures went their way and we ours, and the two did not cross.

William Beebe, *Jungle Peace*. By permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company.

THE STOCKYARDS

A full hour before the party reached the city they had begun to note the perplexing changes in the atmos-

phere. It grew darker all the time, and upon the earth the grass seemed to grow less green. Every minute, as the train sped on, the colors of things became dingier; the fields were grown parched and yellow, the landscape hideous and bare. And along with the thickening smoke they began to notice another circumstance, a strange, pungent odor. They were not sure that it was unpleasant, this odor; some might have called it sickening, but their taste in odors was not developed, and they were only sure that it was curious. Now, sitting in the trolley car, they realized that they were on their way to the home of it—that they had traveled all the way from Lithuania to it. It was now no longer something far-off and faint, that you caught in whiffs; you could literally taste it as well as smell it—you could take hold of it, almost, and examine it at your leisure. They were divided in their opinions about it. It was an elemental odor, raw and crude; it was rich, almost rancid, sensual, and strong. There were some who drank it in as if it were an intoxicant; there were others who put their handkerchiefs to their faces. The new emigrants were still tasting it, lost in wonder, when suddenly the car came to a halt, and the door was flung open, and a voice shouted—"Stock-yards!"

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. By permission of Mr. Upton Sinclair.

THE FOREST

What is a forest but a city of nature's own, full of hardy and innocuous living things, where there is nothing dead and nothing made with the hands, but the citizens themselves are the houses and public monuments? There is nothing so much alive and yet so quiet as a woodland;

and a pair of people, swinging past in canoes, feel very small and bustling by comparison.

And surely, of all smells in the world, the smell of many trees is the sweetest and most fortifying. The sea has a rude pistolling sort of odor, that takes you in the nostrils like snuff, and carries with it a fine sentiment of open water and tall ships; but the smell of a forest, which comes nearer to this in tonic quality, surpasses it by many degrees in the quality of softness. Again, the smell of the sea has little variety, but the smell of a forest is infinitely changeful; it varies with the hour of the day, not in strength merely, but in character; and the different sorts of trees, as you go from one zone of the woods to another, seem to live among different kinds of atmosphere. Usually the rosin of the fir predominates. But some woods are more coquettish in their habits; and the breath of the forest Mormal, as it came aboard upon us that showery afternoon, was perfumed with nothing less delicate than sweetbrier.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *An Inland Voyage*.
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authorized publishers.

BROWSING AND NIBBLING

Along the banks of the streams of South Carolina and Georgia grows a grape, known by the musical name of muscadine, which I esteem as altogether the wildest and raciest of all wild fruit. Its juice has the musty flavor of old wine along with a strange aromatic quality peculiarly its own. On splendid moonlight nights I have swung in the muscadine vines, slowly feasting on the great purple globes, while the raccoons fought savagely in the trees hard by, and a clear river gently murmured below. Next to the muscadine among wild fruits I rate

the pawpaw as best. It is genuinely wild, rich, racy, and to me palatable and digestible. I once sent a box of pawpaws to a great Boston author, whose friendship I chanced to possess, and was much disappointed to learn that the musty odor of the fruit was very distasteful to him. He fancied that the pawpaws were rotten. I dare say he never tasted them; and if he had, their flavor would have been too rank and savage for his endurance.

Browsing and nibbling has led me to taste the inner bark of nearly every kind of tree growing in American woods. The hickory tree has a sap almost as sweet as that of the maple, but it mingles with the sweet a pungency and a slightly acrid element of taste at once pleasing and repellent to the pampered tongue. The oaks have much tannin in their bark, the astringency of which draws one's lips like green persimmons, but the very innermost part, next the wood, is slightly mucilaginous and faintly sweet. Speaking of persimmons,—after a few sharp frosts this fruit becomes mellow and rich, but to the last retains a certain drawing quality, a trace of that astringency already mentioned, which keeps it from being a favorite, save with the opossums.

There is no other woodland influence, however, so strong and so fine as the perfumes, odors, and aromas. Of these each season has its own—the perfume of spring flowers, the odors of summer mosses and sweet punk, the aroma of buds and barks and gums. Even in mid-winter, when a warm time comes, and the snow melts, and the ground is thoroughly thawed, there are woodsy odors borne about by the drowsy winds. In fact, the fragrance of January is sweeter than that of May. Go nibble the brown, pointed buds of the beech tree in mid-winter, and you will find how well the individuality of the trees is condensed in those laminated little spikes.

You taste the perfume of tassels and the fragrance of young leaves; there is an aromatic hint of coming nuts. You may almost taste the songs of the spring birds. What words these buds are! How prophetic! We bite them, and lo, the spring rises in a vision. Its poem is read in advance.

I recollect a fountain of clear water around which grew festoons of cress and mint. I had been chasing the wild things all the morning, as a true huntsman will, and now I was tired and thirsty. At such a time, what could be more welcome than mint and water? How soothing the fragrant flavor and the cooling draught! Then came the biting spiciness of the cress, to reinvigorate my nerve withal. Out of my pouch I drew a cake of maple sugar, and feasted like a god.

When winter begins to come on, the nuts come too. I cannot understand the taste of those who do not like the rich, oily kernels of the butternut, the hickory nut, and the sweet acorns of the pine oak. Squirrels know which side of a nut is buttered. They have long ago learned that it is the inside. From Florida to Michigan one may run the gamut of nuts, beginning with the lily-nuts, or water chinque-pins, and running up to the great black walnut, including every shade of flavor and fatness. They are all good. They were made to eat in the open air; and he who takes them, as the squirrels do, after vigorous exercise in the woods, will find great comfort in them. I cannot rank the artist or poet very high whose stomach is too aristocratic for wild berries, nuts and aromatic bark. I fear that such an one has long since allowed the trace of savage vigor, which made him of kin to Pan or Apollo, to slip away and be lost,

IN QUEST OF FOOD

In my noonday quest for food, if the day is fine, it is my habit to shun the nearer places of refreshment. I take the air and stretch myself. Like Eve's serpent I go upright for a bit. Yet if time presses, there may be had next door a not unsavory stowage. A drinking bar is nearest to the street where its polished brasses catch the eye. It holds a gilded mirror to such red-faced nature as consorts within. Yet you pass the bar and come upon a range of tables at the rear.

Now, if you yield to the habits of the place you order a rump of meat. Gravy lies about it like a moat around a castle, and if there is in you the zest for encounter, you attack it above these murky waters. "This castle hath a pleasant seat," you cry, and charge upon it with pike advanced. But if your appetite is one to peck and mince, the whiffs that breathe upon the place come unwelcome to your nostrils. In no wise are they like the sweet South upon your senses. There is even a suspicion in you—such is your distemper—that it is too much a witch's cauldron in the kitchen, "eye of newt, and toe of frog," and you spy and poke upon your food. Bus boys bear off the crockery as though they were apprenticed to a juggler and were only at the beginning of their art. Waiters bawl strange messages to the cook. It's a tongue unguessed by learning, yet sharp and potent. Also, there comes a riot from the kitchen, and steam issues from the door as though the devil himself were a partner and conducted here an upper branch. Like the man in the old comedy, your belly may still ring dinner, but the tinkle is faint. Such being your state, you choose a daintier place to eat.

Having now set out upon a longer journey—the day being fine and the sidewalks thronged—you pass by a restaurant that is but a few doors up the street. A fellow in a white coat flops pancakes in the window. But even though the pancake does a double somersault and there are twenty curious noses pressed against the glass, still you keep your course uptown.

Nor are you led off because a near-by stairway beckons you to a Chinese restaurant up above. A golden dragon swings over the door. Its race has fallen since its fire-breathing grandsire guarded the fruits of the Hesperides. Are not “soys” and “chou mains” and other such treasures of the East laid out above? And yet the dragon dozes at its post like a sleepy dog. No flame leaps up its gullet. The swish of its tail is stilled. If it wag at all, it’s but in friendship, or because a gust of wind has stirred it from its dreams.

I have wondered why Chinese restaurants are generally on the second story. A casual inquiry attests it. I know of one, it is true, on the ground level, yet here I suspect a special economy. The place had formerly been a German restaurant, with Teuton scrolls, “Ich Dien,” and heraldries on its walls. A frugal brush changed the decoration. From the heart of a Prussian blazonry, there flares on you in Chinese yellow a recommendation to try “Our Chicken Chop Soy.” The quartering of the House of Hohenzollern wears a baldric in praise of “Subgum Noodle Warmein,” which it seems they cook to an unusual delicacy. Even a wall painting of Rip Van Winkle bowling at tenpins in the mountains is now set off with a pigtail. But the chairs are Dutch and remain as such. Generally, however, Chinese restaurants are on the second story. Probably there is a ritual from the

ancient days of Ming Ti that Chinamen when they eat shall sit as near as possible to the sacred moon.

Charles S. Brooks, *There's Pippins and Cheese To Come*. Used by permission of Yale University Press.

LITTLE ITALY

You may imagine, then, my privilege in being able to accompany the Epicure the other day to the Italian market at Ninth and Christian streets, where he purposed to look over the stalls. It was a day of entrancing sunlight, when all that lively district of Little Italy leaped and trembled in the fulness of light and appetizing fluent air. One saw a secret pathos in the effort to reproduce in the flat dull streets of a foreign city something of the color and mirth of Mediterranean soil. One often wonders what fantastic dream or illusion—was it only a steamship poster?—led so many citizens of the loveliest land on earth to forsake their blue hills and opal valleys to people the cheerless byways of American towns?

. . . Christian street breathes the Italian genius for good food. After lunching in a well-known Italian restaurant on Catherine street, where the Epicure instructed me in the mysteries of gnocchi, frittura mista, rognone, scallopini al marsala and that marvelously potent clear coffee which seems to the uninstructed to taste more like wine than coffee, and has a curious shimmer of green round the rim of the liquid, we strolled among the pavements stalls of the little market. It seems to me, just from a cursory study of the exhibit, that the secret of Italian gusto for food is that they take it closer to nature, and also that they are less keen than we about meat. They do not buy their food already prepared in cardboard boxes. Fish, vegetables, cheese, fruit, and nuts

seem to be their chief delights. Fish of every imaginable kind may be seen on Christian street. Some of them, small, flattened, silver-shining things, are packed cunningly in kegs in a curious concentric pattern so that the glitter of their perished eyes gleams in hypnotizing circles. Eels, mussels, skates, shrimps, cuttlefish—small pink corpses, bathed in their own ink—and some very tiny ocean morsels that look like white-bait. Cheeses of every kind and color, some of them a dull yellow and molded in a queer gourd-like shape. But the vegetables and herbs are the most inscrutable. Even the gastrologer Epicure was unable to explain them all to me. Chopped bayleaves, artichokes, mushrooms, bunches of red and green peppers, little boxes of dried peas, beans, powdered red pepper, wrinkled olives and raisins, and strange-smelling bundles of herbs that smell only like straw, but which presumably possess some strange seasoning virtue to those who understand them. In the windows of the grocer's shops you will always find *Funghi secchi della Liguria* (Ligurian dried mushrooms), and *Finocchio uso Sicilia* (Fennel, Sicilian style), whose names are poems in themselves. And, of course, the long Bologna sausages—and great round loaves of bread.

Christopher Morley, *Travels in Philadelphia*.
By permission of the author and David McKay
Company.

FEELING

EVENING

I turned my face toward home. Evening was falling, and as I walked I heard the crows calling, and the air was keen and cool, and I thought deep thoughts.

And so I stepped into the darkened stable. I could

not see the outlines of the horse or the cow, but knowing the place so well I could easily get about. I heard the horse step aside with a soft expectant whinny. I smelled the smell of milk, the musty, sharp odor of dry hay, the pungent smell of manure, not unpleasant. And the stable was warm after the cool of the fields with a sort of animal warmth that struck into me soothingly. I spoke in a low voice and laid my hand on the horse's flank. The flesh quivered and shrunk away from my touch—coming back confidently, warmly. I ran my hand along his back and up his hairy neck. I felt his sensitive nose in my hand. "You shall have your oats," I said, and I gave him to eat. Then I spoke as gently to the cow, and she stood aside to be milked.

And afterward I came out into the clear bright night, and the air was sweet and cool, and my dog came bounding to meet me.—So I carried the milk into the house.

From *Adventures in Contentment*, by David Grayson. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co. Used by permission.

HEAT OF THE DESERT

As long as you are journeying in the interior of the Desert you have no particular point to make for as your resting-place. The endless sands yield nothing but small stunted shrubs;—even these fail after the first two or three days, and from that time you pass over broad plains,—you pass over newly reared hills,—you pass through valleys that the storm of the last week has dug, and the hills and the valleys are sand, sand, sand, still sand, and only sand, and sand, and sand again. The earth is so samely that your eyes turn towards heaven—towards heaven, I mean, in the sense of sky. You look to

the Sun, for he is your task-master, and by him you know the measure of the work that you have done, and the measure of the work that remains for you to do. He comes when you strike your tent in the early morning, and then, for the first hour of the day, as you move forward on your camel, he stands at your near side, and makes you know that the whole day's toil is before you;—then for a while, and a long while, you see him no more, for you are veiled and shrouded, and dare not look upon the greatness of his glory, but you know where he strides over head, by the touch of his flaming sword. No words are spoken, but your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, and for sights you see the pattern and the web of the silk that veils your eyes, and the glare of the outer light. Time labors on;—your skin glows, your shoulders ache, your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, and you see the same pattern in the silk, and the same glare of light beyond; but conquering time marches on, and by and by the descending Sun has compassed the Heaven, and now softly touches your right arm, and throws your lank shadow over the sand, right along on the way for Persia; then again you look upon his face, for his power is all veiled in his beauty, and the redness of flames has become the redness of roses;—the fair, wavy cloud that fled in the morning now comes to his sight once more—comes blushing, yet still comes on, comes burning with blushes, yet hastens, and clings to his side.

Alexander W. Kinglake, *Eothen*.

A CORN-FIELD

A corn-field in July is a sultry place. The soil is hot and dry; the wind comes across the lazily murmuring

leaves laden with a warm, sickening smell drawn from the rapidly growing, broad-flung banners of the corn. The sun, nearly vertical, drops a flood of dazzling light upon the field over which the cool shadows run, only to make the heat seem more intense.

Julia Peterson, faint with hunger, was toiling back and forth between the corn-rows, holding the handles of the double-shovel corn-plough, while her little brother Otto rode the steaming horse. Her heart was full of bitterness, her face flushed with heat, and her muscles aching with fatigue. The heat grew terrible. The corn came to her shoulders, and not a breath seemed to reach her, while the sun, nearing the noon mark, lay pitilessly upon her shoulders, protected only by a calico dress. The dust rose under her feet, and as she was wet with perspiration it soiled her till with a woman's instinctive cleanliness, she shuddered. Her head throbbed dangerously. What matter to her that the kingbird pitched joyfully from the maples to catch a wandering bluebottle fly, that the robin was feeding its young, that the bobolink was singing? All these things, if she saw them, only threw her bondage to labor into greater relief.

Across the field, in another patch of corn, she could see her father—a big, gruff-voiced, wide-bearded Norwegian—at work also with a plough. The corn must be ploughed, and so she toiled on, the tears dropping from the shadow of the ugly sunbonnet she wore. Her shoes, coarse and square-toed, chafed her feet; her hands, large and strong, were browned, or, more properly *burnt*, on the backs by the sun. The horse's harness "*creak-cracked*" as he swung steadily and patiently forward, the moisture pouring from his sides, his nostrils distended.

Hamlin Garland, *Main Travelled Roads*. By permission of Mr. Hamlin Garland.

PLAGUE IN NEW ORLEANS

. . . Eighteen hundred and sixty-seven;—midsummer in the pest-smitten city of New Orleans.

Heat motionless and ponderous. The steel-blue of the sky bleached from the furnace-circle of the horizon;—the luke-warm river ran yellow and noiseless as a torrent of fluid wax. Even sounds seemed blunted by the heaviness of the air;—the rumbling of wheels, the reverberation of footsteps, fell half-toned upon the ear, like sounds that visit a dozing brain.

Daily, almost at the same hour, the continuous sense of atmospheric oppression became thickened;—a packed herd of low-bellying clouds lumbered up from the Gulf; crowded blackly against the sun; flickered, thundered, and burst in torrential rain—tepid, perpendicular—and vanished utterly away. Then, more furiously than before, the sun flamed down;—roofs and pavements steamed; the streets seemed to smoke; the air grew suffocating with vapor; and the luminous city filled with a faint sickly odor,—a stale smell, as of dead leaves suddenly disinterred from wet mould,—as of grasses decomposing after a flood. Something saffron speckled the slimy water of the gutters; sulphur some called it; others feared even to give it a name! Was it only the wind-blown pollen of some innocuous plant? I do not know; but to many it seemed as if the Invisible Destruction were scattering visible seed! . . . Such were the days; and each day the terror-stricken city offered up its hecatomb to death; and the faces of all the dead were yellow as flame!

“Décédé—”; “Décédée—”; “Fallecio”;—“Died” . . . On the door-posts, the telegraph-poles, the pillars of verandas, the lamps,—over the government letter-boxes,—

everywhere glimmered the white annunciations of death. All the city was spotted with them. And lime was poured into the gutters; and huge purifying fires were kindled after sunset.

The nights began with a black heat;—there were hours when the acrid air seemed to ferment for stagnation, and to burn the bronchial tubing—then, toward morning, it would grow chill with venomous vapors, with morbidic dews,—till the sun came up to lift the torpid moisture, and to fill the buildings with oven-glow. And the interminable procession of mourners and hearses and carriages again began to circulate between the centres of life and of death;—and long trains and steamships rushed from the port with heavy burden of fugitives.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita*. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

FRISSON

Some there may be who have never felt the thrill of a human touch; but surely these are few! Most of us in early childhood discover strange differences in physical contact;—we find that some caresses soothe, while others irritate; and we form in consequence various unreasoning likes and antipathies. . . . I remember the touch of many hands,—the quality of each clasp, the sense of physical sympathy or repulsion aroused. Thousands I have indeed forgotten,—probably because their contact told me nothing in particular; but the strong experiences I fully recollect. I found that their agreeable or disagreeable character was often quite independent of the moral relation: but in the most extraordinary case that I can recall—(a strangely fascinating personality with the strangest of careers as poet, soldier, and refugee)—

the moral and the physical charm were equally powerful and equally rare. "Whenever I shake hands with that man," said to me one of many who had yielded to his spell, "I feel a warm shock go through me, like a glow of summer." Even at this moment when I think of that dead hand, I can feel it reached out to me over the space of twenty years and of many thousand miles. Yet it was a hand that had killed. . . .

Warmth and softness in themselves are not enough to produce the thrill of pleasure . . . Smoothness has quite as much to do with the pleasure of touch as either softness or warmth can have; yet a moist or a very dry smoothness may be disagreeable. Again, cool smoothness in the human skin is perhaps even more agreeable than warm smoothness; yet there is a cool smoothness common to many lower forms of life which causes a shudder. Whatever be those qualities making pleasurable the touch of a hand, for example, they are probably very many in combination, and they are certainly peculiar to the *living* touch. . . .

Like sight, though perhaps less deeply, do other of our senses reach into the buried past. A single strain of melody, the sweetness of a single voice—what thrill immeasurable will either make in the fathomless sleep of ancestral memory! Again, who does not know that speechless delight bestirred in us on rare bright days by something odorous in the atmosphere,—enchancing, but indefinable? The first breath of spring, the blowing of a mountain breeze, a south wind from the sea may bring this emotion,—an emotion overwhelming, yet nameless as its cause—an ecstasy formless and transparent as the air. Whatever be the odor, diluted to very ghostliness, that arouses this delight, the delight itself is too weirdly voluminous to be explained by any memory-revival of

merely individual experience. More probably it is older even than human life,—reaches deeper into the infinite blind depth of dead pleasure and pain.

Out of that ghostly abyss also must come the thrill responding within us to a living touch,—touch electrical of man, questioning the heart,—touch magical of woman, invoking memory of caresses given by countless delicate and loving hands long crumbled into dust. Doubt it not!—the touch that makes a thrill within you is a touch that you have felt before,—sense-echo of forgotten intimacies in many unremembered lives!

Lafcadio Hearn, *Exotics and Retrospectives*.
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SENSES IN COMBINATION

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

There was a stiff, dry, west wind blowing, and a blue haze in the air. As the afternoon advanced, the sun grew red as if looked at through smoked glass, burning like a great coal of fire on a broad disk of red-hot iron.

There was a scent of burning grass in the air when I found my herd over on Section Eight, . . . The cattle seemed to be uneasy, and when I started them toward home, they walked fast, snuffing the air, and giving once in a while an uneasy, anxious falsetto bellow; and now and then they would break into a trot as they drew nearer to the places they knew. The smell of smoke grew stronger, and I knew there was a prairie fire burning to the westward. The sun was a deeper red, now, and once in a while almost disappeared in clouds of vaporous smoke which rolled higher and higher into the sky. Prairie:

chickens, plover and curlew, with once in a while a bittern, went hurriedly along to the eastward, and several wolves crossed our path, trotting along and paying no attention to me or the cows; but stopping from time to time and looking back as if pursued from the west. . . .

As I topped the hill to get back to the high ground, I saw great clouds of smoke pouring into the valley at the west passage into the big flat, and the country to the south was hidden by the smoke, except where, away off in the southwest in the changing of the wind, I could see the line of fire as it came over the high ground west of the old Bill Trickey farm. It was a broad belt of red flames, from which there crept along the ground a great blanket of smoke, black at first, and then turning to blue as it rose and thinned. I began making haste; for it now looked as if the fire might reach the head of the slew before I could, and thus cut me off. I felt in my pocket for matches; for in case of need, the only way to fight fire is with fire. . . .

I gathered a little armful of dry grass, and lighted it with a match to the leeward of us. It spread fast, though I lighted it where the grass was thin so as to avoid a hot fire; but on the side toward the wind, where the blaze was feeble, I carefully whipped it out with my slouch hat. In a minute or so, I had a line of two or three rods long, of little blazes, each a circle of fire burning more and more fiercely on the leeward side, and more feebly on the side where the blaze was fanned away from its fuel. This side of each circle I whipped out with my hat, some of them with difficulty. Soon, we had a fierce fire raging, leaving in front of us a growing area of black ashes.

We were now between two fires; the great conflagration from which we were trying to protect ourselves came

all about us, its hot breath beginning to scorch us, its snapping and crackling now reaching the ear—along with its roar; while on the east was the fire of my own kindling, growing in speed, racing off away from us, leaving behind it our haven of refuge, a tract swept clean of food for the flames, but hot and smoking, and as yet all too small to be safe, for the heat and smoke might kill where the flames could not reach. Between the two fires was the fast narrowing strip of dry grass from which we must soon move. Our safety lay in the following of one fire to escape the other.

The main army of the flames coming on from the west, with its power of suction, fanned itself to a faster pace than our new line could attain, and the heat increased, both from the racing crimson line to the west, and the slower-moving back-fire on the other side. We sweltered and almost suffocated. . . .

I was a little anxious for a few minutes for fear I had not started my back-fire soon enough; but the fear soon passed. The fire came on with a swelling roar. We followed our back-fire so close as to be almost blistered by it, coughing, gasping, covering our mouths and nostrils in such a heat and smother that I could scarcely support Rowena and keep my own footing. Suddenly the heat and smoke grew less; I looked around, and saw that the fire had reached our burnt area, and the line was cut for lack of fuel. It divided as a wave is split by a rock, and went in two great moving spouting fountains of red down the line of our back-fire, and swept on, leaving us scorched, blackened, bloodshot of eye and sore of lips, but safe.

From *Vandemark's Folly*, by Herbert Quick.
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SENSE MEMORIES

Of all this that was being done to complicate his education, he knew only the color of yellow. He first found himself sitting on a yellow kitchen floor in strong sunlight. He was three years old when he took this earliest step in education: a lesson of color. The second followed soon: a lesson of taste. On December 3, 1841, he developed scarlet fever. For several days he was as good as dead, reviving only under the careful nursing of his family. When he began to recover strength, about January 1, 1842, his hunger must have been stronger than any other pleasure or pain, for while in after life he retained not the faintest recollection of his illness, he remembered quite clearly his aunt entering the sickroom bearing in her hand a saucer with a baked apple.

The order of impressions retained by memory might naturally be that of color and taste, although one would naturally rather suppose that the sense of pain would be first to educate. In fact, the third recollection of the child was that of discomfort. The moment he could be moved, he was bundled up in blankets, and carried from the little house in Hancock Avenue to a larger one which his parents were to occupy for the rest of their lives in the neighboring Mount Vernon Street. The season was midwinter, January 10, 1842, and he never forgot his acute distress for want of air under his blankets, or the noises of moving furniture. . . .

Boys are wild animals, rich in the treasures of sense, but the New England boy had a wider range of emotions than boys of more equable climates. He felt his nature crudely, as it was meant. To the boy Henry Adams, summer was drunken. Among senses, smell was the strongest—smell of hot pine-woods and sweet-fern in the

scorching summer noon; of new-mown hay; of ploughed earth; of box hedges; of peaches, lilacs, syringas; of stables, barns, cow-yards; of salt water and low tide on the marshes; nothing came amiss. Next to smell came taste, and the children knew the taste of everything they saw or touched, from pennyroyal and flagroot to the shell of a pignut and the letters of a spelling-book—the taste of A-B, AB, suddenly revived on the boy's tongue sixty years afterwards. Light, line, and color as sensual pleasures, came later and were as crude as the rest. The New England light is glare, and the atmosphere harshens color. The boy was a full man before he ever knew what was meant by atmosphere; his idea of pleasure in light was the blaze of a New England sun. His idea of color was a peony, with the dew of early morning on its petals. The intense blue of the sea, as he saw it a mile or two away, from the Quincy hills; the cumuli in a June afternoon sky; the strong reds and greens and purples of colored prints and children's picture-books, as the American colors then ran; these were ideals. The opposites or antipathies were the cold grays of November evenings, and the thick, muddy thaws of Boston winter. With such standards, the Bostonian could not but develop a double nature. Life was a double thing. After a January blizzard, the boy who could look with pleasure into the violent snow-glare of the cold white sunshine, with its intense light and shade, scarcely knew what was meant by tone. He could reach it only by education.

Winter and summer, then, were two hostile lives, and bred two separate natures. Winter was always the effort to live; summer was tropical license. Whether the children rolled in the grass, or waded in the brook, or swam in the salt ocean, or sailed in the bay, or fished for smelts

in the creeks, or netted minnows in the salt-marshes, or took to the pine-woods and the granite-quarries, or chased muskrats and hunted snapping-turtles in the swamps, or mushrooms and nuts on the autumn hills, summer and country were always sensual living, while winter was always compulsory learning. Summer was the multiplicity of nature; winter was school.

Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*.
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THE TEEMING SEA

Sand and sea teem with vitality;—over all the dunes there is a constant susurrations, a blattering and swarming of crustacea;—through all the sea there is a ceaseless play of silver lightning,—flashing of myriad fish. Sometimes the shallows are thickened with minute, transparent, crab-like organisms,—all colorless as gelatine. There are days also when countless medusæ drift in—beautiful veined creatures that throb like hearts, with perpetual systole and diastole of their diaphanous envelopes: some of translucent azure or rose, seem in the flood the shadows or ghosts of huge campanulate flowers;—others have the semblance of strange living vegetables,—great milky tubers, just beginning to sprout. But woe to the human skin grazed by those shadowy sproutings and spectral stamens!—the touch of glowing iron is not more painful. . . . Within an hour or two after their appearance all these tremulous jellies vanish mysteriously as they came.

Perhaps, if a bold swimmer, you may venture out alone a long way—once! Not twice—even in company. As the water deepens beneath you, and you feel those as-

cending wave-currents of coldness arising which bespeak profundity, you will also begin to feel innumerable touches, as of groping fingers—touches of the bodies of fish, innumerable fish, fleeing towards shore. The farther you advance, the more thickly you will feel them come; and above you and around you, to right and left, others will leap and fall so swiftly as to daze the sight, like intercrossing fountain-jets of fluid silver. The gulls fly lower about you, circling with sinister squeaking cries:—perhaps for an instant your feet touch in the deep something heavy, swift, lithe, that rushes past with a swirling shock. Then the fear of the Abyss, the vast and voiceless Nightmare of the Sea, will come upon you; the silent panic of all those opaline millions that flee glimmering by will enter into you also, . . .

From what do they flee thus perpetually? Is it from the giant sawfish or the ravening shark?—from the herds of the porpoises or from the *grande-écaille*,—that splendid monster whom no net may hold,—all helmed and armored in argent plate-mail?—or from the hideous devil-fish of the Gulf,—gigantic, flat-bodied, black, with immense side-fins ever outspread like the pinions of a bat,—the terror of luggermen, the uprooter of anchors? From all these, perhaps, and from other monsters likewise,—goblin shapes evolved by Nature as destroyers, as equilibrists, as counterchecks to that prodigious fecundity, which, unhindered, would thicken the deep into one measureless and waveless ferment of being. . . . But when there are many bathers these perils are forgotten,—numbers give courage,—one can abandon one's self, without fear of the invisible, to the long, quivering, electrical caresses of the sea. . . .

Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita*. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

NIGHTFALL IN THE TROPICS

The sun is already low, and yellow with a tinge of orange: as he falls between the palms his stare colors the world with a strange hue—such phantasmal light as might be given by a nearly burnt-out sun. The air is full of unfamiliar odors. We pass a flame-colored bush; and an extraordinary perfume—strange, rich, sweet—envelopes us like a caress: the soul of a red jasmine. . . .

What a tropical sunset is this—within two days' steam-journey of the equator. Almost to the zenith the sky flames up from the sea,—one tremendous orange incandescence, rapidly deepening to vermillion as the sun dips. The indescribable intensity of this mighty burning makes one totally unprepared for the spectacle of its sudden passing; a seeming drawing down from behind the sea of the whole vast flare of light. . . . Instantly the world becomes indigo. The air grows humid, weighty with vapor; frogs commence to make a queer bubbling noise; and some unknown creature begins in the trees a singular music, not trilling, like the note of our cricket, but one continuous shrill tone, high, keen, as of a thin jet of steam leaking through a valve. Strong vegetal scents, aromatic and novel, rise up. Under the trees of our hotel I hear a continuous dripping sound; the drops fall heavily, like bodies of clumsy insects. But it is not dew, nor insects; it is a thick, transparent jelly, a fleshy liquor that falls in immense drops. The night grows chill with dew, with vegetable breath; and we sleep with windows nearly closed.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies*. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

VESPERTINA COGNITIO

The night stifled;—the air seemed to be coagulating. The single large window, overlooking a garden, had been left open,—but there was no movement in that atmosphere. Bats—very large bats—flew soundlessly in and out;—one actually fanning my face with its wings as it circled over the bed. Heavy scents of tropical fruit—nauseously sweet—rose from the garden, where palms and plantains stood still as if made of metal. From the woods above the town stormed the usual night-chorus of tree-frogs, insects, and nocturnal birds,—a tumult not to be accurately described by any simile, but suggesting, through numberless sharp tinkling tones, the fancy of a wide slow cataract of broken glass. I tossed and turned on the hot hard bed, vainly trying to find one spot a little cooler than the rest. Then I rose, drew a rocking-chair to the window and lighted a cigar. The smoke hung motionless; after each puff, I had to blow it away. My man had ceased to snore. The bronze of his naked breast—shining with moisture under the faint light of the shrine-lamp,—showed no movement of respiration. He might have been a corpse. The heavy heat seemed always to become heavier. At last, utterly exhausted, I went back to bed, and slept.

It must have been well after midnight when I felt the first vague uneasiness,—*the suspicion*,—that precedes a nightmare. I was half-conscious, dream-conscious of the actual,—knew myself in that very room,—wanted to get up. Immediately the uneasiness grew into terror, because I found that I could not move. Something unutterable in the air was mastering will. I tried to cry out, and my utmost effort resulted only in a whisper too low for any one to hear. Simultaneously I became aware

of a Step ascending the stair,—a muffled heaviness; and the real nightmare began,—the horror of the ghastly magnetism that held voice and limb,—the hopeless will-struggle against dumbness and impotence. The stealthy Step approached,—but with lentor malevolently measured,—slowly, slowly, as if the stairs were miles deep. It gained the threshold,—waited. Gradually then, and without sound, the locked door opened; and the Thing entered, bending as it came,—a thing robed,—feminine,—reaching to the roof,—not to be looked at! A floor-plank creaked as It neared the bed;—and then—with a frantic effort—I woke, bathed in sweat; my heart beating as if it were going to burst. The shrine-light had died: in the blackness I could see nothing; but I thought I heard that Step retreating. I certainly heard the plank creak again. With the panic still upon me, I was actually unable to stir. The wisdom of striking a match occurred to me, but I dared not yet rise. Presently, as I held my breath to listen, a new wave of black fear passed through me; for I heard moanings;—long nightmare moanings,—moanings that seemed to be answering each other from two different rooms below. And then, close to me, my guide began to moan,—hoarsely, hideously.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Exotics and Retrospectives*.
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THE BELLS OF CHARTRES

A necessary ingredient of any full experience is terror; I came close to it when M. Battais, one of the caretakers of Chartres cathedral . . . instructed me to help him ring the noonday bells. In the roaring cave of that lacy spire, see-sawing on the crossbeam of a bronze monster

that seemed as maniac as Victor Hugo's cannon, we sprang and clung. Through the long windows the sunny roofs of Chartres, far below, spun a fantastic rigolo. You grasp an iron bar on the fixed rafter above the great bell. With one foot on the airy scaffold, you put the other on the rocking crossbeam, and begin with gently measured shoves. Then, stronger and stronger you bear down, sinking lower each dip as the bronze begins to roll. With a jarring thunder the metal takes voice and comes alive. Farther and farther down you swing, on one foot, until the other leg loses its purchase on the platform. Now, with a wild capering you reel up and down, watching M. Battais in his shirtsleeves and skull cap as he grimly oscillates on the other side. The bell is already making nearly a 180-degree swing; the shaking explosions of sound are bewildering; you begin to wonder if it is his intention to make it go all the way round? For you didn't catch any too clearly just what he had told you, in French, to do next—except to hold on tight. You meditate sadly, as you bound on and off the flying beam, that the spire is centuries old, and that this appalling vibration is enough to burst the silver-gray stones asunder. Today, today, evidently is the final moment when disintegration is due. How startled Titania will be, calmly sitting at the Grande Monarche inn, to hear the crash; and you yourself to be assimilated from fragments of stained glass and lichen. The adorable ironies of life! You came to Chartres, a simple pilgrim, in quest of its solemn peace: and here you ride a mustang bronze, a hundred yards in air, that shouts toward God in a hullabaloo the Seventh Avenue subway never dreamed. Then it is over: you stand wiping your brow among the pinnacles, while M. Battais dislodges a tiny seed pod of

yellow gilliflower growing between the toes of a stone chimera, for you to plant in your garden at home.

Christopher Morley, *Petites Annonces* in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 4, 1924. By permission of Mr. Christopher Morley and Mr. H. S. Canby, editor of *The Saturday Review*.

THE BOMBARDMENT

Slowly, without force, the rain drops into the city. It stops a moment on the carved head of Saint John, then slides on again, slipping and trickling over his stone cloak. It splashes from the lead conduit of a gargoyle, and falls from it in turmoil on the stones in the Cathedral square. Where are the people, and why does the fretted steeple sweep about in the sky? Boom! The sound swings against the rain. Boom again! After it, only water rushing into the gutters, and the turmoil from the spout of the gargoyle. Silence. Ripples and mutters. Boom!

The room is damp, but warm. Little flashes swarm about from the firelight. The lustres of the chandelier are bright, and clusters of rubies leap in the bohemian glass on the étagère. Her hands are restless, but the white masses of her hair are quite still. Boom! Will it ever cease to torture, this iteration? Boom! The vibration shatters a glass on the étagère. It lies there, formless and glowing, with all its crimson gleams shot out of pattern, spilled, flowing red, blood-red. A thin bell-note pricks through the silence. A door creaks. The old lady speaks: "Victor, clear away that broken glass." "Alas! Madame, the bohemian glass!" "Yes, Victor,

one hundred years ago my father brought it—" Boom! The room shakes, the servitor quakes. Another goblet shivers and breaks. Boom!

It rustles at the window-pane, the smooth, streaming rain, and he is shut within its clash and murmur. Inside is his candle, his table, his ink, his pen, and his dreams. He is thinking, and the walls are pierced with beams of sunshine, slipping through young green. A fountain tosses itself up at the blue sky, and through the spattered water in the basin he can see copper carp, lazily floating among cold leaves. A wind-harp in a cedar-tree grieves and whispers, and words blow into his brain, bubbled, iridescent, shooting up like flowers of fire, higher and higher. Boom! The flame-flowers snap on their slender stems. The fountain rears up in long broken spears of dishevelled water, and flattens into the earth. Boom! And there is only the room, the table, the candle, and the sliding rain. Again, Boom!—Boom!—Boom! He stuffs his fingers into his ears. He sees corpses, and cries out in fright. Boom! It is night, and they are shelling the city! Boom! Boom!

A child wakes and is afraid, and weeps in the darkness. What has made the bed shake? "Mother, where are you? I am awake." "Hush, my Darling, I am here." "But, Mother, something so queer happened, the room shook." Boom! "Oh! what is it? What is the matter?" Boom! "Where is Father? I am so afraid." Boom! The child sobs and shrieks. The house trembles and creaks. Boom!

Retorts, globes, tubes, and phials lie shattered. All his trials oozing across the floor. The life that was his choosing, lonely, urgent, goaded by a hope, all gone. A weary man in a ruined laboratory, that is his story. Boom! Gloom and ignorance, and the jig of drunken

brutes. Diseases like snakes crawling over the earth, leaving trails of slime. Wails from people burying their dead. Through the window, he can see the rocking steeple. A ball of fire falls on the lead of the roof, and the sky tears apart on a spike of flame. Up the spire, behind the lacings of stone, zigzagging in and out of the carved tracings, squirms the fire. It spouts like yellow wheat from the gargoyles, coils round the head of Saint John, and aureoles him in light. It leaps into the night and hisses against the rain. The Cathedral is a burning stain on the white, wet night.

Boom! The Cathedral is a torch, and the houses next to it begin to scorch. Boom! The bohemian glass on the *étagère* is no longer there. Boom! A stalk of flame sways against the red damask curtains. The old lady cannot walk. She watches the creeping stalk and counts. Boom!—Boom!—Boom!—

The poet rushes into the street, and the rain wraps him in a sheet of silver. But it is threaded with gold and powdered with scarlet beads. The city burns. Quivering, spearing, thrusting, lapping, streaming, run the flames. Over roofs, and walls, and shops, and stalls. Smearing the gold on the sky, the fire dances, lances itself through the doors, and lisps and chuckles along the floors.

The child wakes again and screams at the yellow petalled flower flickering at the window. The little red lips of flame creep along the ceiling beams.

The old man sits among his broken experiments and looks at the burning Cathedral. Now the streets are swarming with people. They seek shelter and crowd into the cellars. They shout and call, and over all, slowly and without force, the rain drops into the city. Boom! And the steeple crashes down among the people. Boom!

Boom, again! The water rushes along the gutters. The fire roars and mutters. Boom!

Amy Lowell, *Men, Women, and Ghosts*. Used by permission of, and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

THE BESSEMER FURNACE

He was taken to the Bessemer furnace, where they made billets of steel—a dome-like building the size of a big theatre. Jurgis stood where the balcony of the theatre would have been, and opposite, by the stage, he saw three giant caldrons, big enough for all the devils of hell to brew their broth in, full of something white and blinding, bubbling and splashing, roaring as if volcanoes were blowing through it—one had to shout to be heard in the place. Liquid fire would leap from these caldrons and scatter like bombs below—and men were working there, seeming careless, so that Jurgis caught his breath with fright. Then a whistle would toot, and across the curtain of the theatre would come a little engine with a car-load of something to be dumped into one of the receptacles; and then another whistle would toot, down by the stage, and another train would back up—and suddenly, without an instant's warning, one of the giant kettles began to tilt and topple, flinging out a jet of hissing, roaring flame. Jurgis shrank back appalled, for he thought it was an accident; there fell a pillar of white flame, dazzling as the sun, swishing like a huge tree falling in the forest. A torrent of sparks swept all the way across the building, overwhelming everything, hiding it from sight; and then Jurgis looked through the fingers of his hands, and saw pouring out of the caldron a cascade of living, leaping fire, white with a whiteness not of

earth, scorching the eyeballs. Incandescent rainbows shone above it, blue, red, and golden lights played about it; but the stream itself was white and ineffable. Out of the region of wonder it streamed, the very river of life; and the soul leaped up at the sight of it, fled back upon it, swift, resistless, back into far-off lands, where beauty and terror dwell.—Then the great caldron tilted back again, empty, and Jurgis saw to his relief that no one was hurt, and turned and followed his guide out into the sunlight.

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. By permission of Mr. Upton Sinclair.

PLOUGHING

The day was fine. Since the first rain of the season, there had been no other. Now the sky was without a cloud, pale blue, delicate, luminous, scintillating with morning. The great brown earth turned a huge flank to it, exhaling the moisture of the early dew. The atmosphere, washed clean of dust and mist, was translucent as crystal. Far off to the east, the hills on the other side of Broderson Creek stood out against the pallid saffron of the horizon as flat and as sharply outlined as if pasted on the sky. The campanile of the ancient Mission of San Juan seemed as fine as frost work. All about between the horizons, the carpet of the land unrolled itself to infinity. But now it was no longer parched with heat, cracked and warped by a merciless sun, powdered with dust. The rain had done its work; not a clod that was not swollen with fertility, not a fissure that did not exhale the sense of fecundity. One could not take a dozen steps upon the ranches without the brusque sensation that underfoot the land was alive; roused at last

from its sleep, palpitating with the desire of reproduction. . . .

The ploughs, thirty-five in number, each drawn by its team of ten, stretched in an interminable line, nearly a quarter of a mile in length, behind and ahead of Vanamee. They were arranged, as it were, *en echelon*, not in file—not one directly behind the other, but each succeeding plough its own width farther in the field than the one in front of it. Each of these ploughs held five shears, so that when the entire company was in motion, one hundred and seventy-five furrows were made at the same instant. At a distance, the ploughs resembled a great column of field artillery. Each driver was in his place, his glance alternating between his horses and the foreman nearest at hand. Other foremen, in their buggies or buckboards, were at intervals along the line, like battery lieutenants. Annixter himself, on horseback, in boots and campaign hat, a cigar in his teeth, overlooked the scene.

The division superintendent, on the opposite side of the line, galloped past to a position at the head. For a long moment there was a silence. A sense of preparedness ran from end to end of the column. All things were ready, each man in his place. The day's work was about to begin.

Suddenly, from a distance at the head of the line came the shrill trilling of a whistle. At once the foreman nearest Vanamee repeated it, at the same time turning down the line, and waving one arm. The signal was repeated, whistle answering whistle, till the sounds lost themselves in the distance. At once the line of ploughs lost its immobility, moving forward, getting slowly under way, the horses straining in the traces. A prolonged movement rippled from team to team, disengaging in its passage a

multitude of sounds—the click of buckles, the creak of straining leather, the subdued clash of machinery, the cracking of whips, the deep breathing of nearly four hundred horses, the abrupt commands and cries of the drivers, and, last of all, the prolonged, soothing murmur of the thick brown earth turning steadily from the multitude of advancing shears.

The ploughing thus commenced, continued. The sun rose higher. Steadily the hundred iron hands kneaded and furrowed and stroked the brown, humid earth, the hundred iron teeth bit deep into the Titan's flesh. Perched on his seat, the moist living reins slipping and tugging in his hands, Vanamee, in the midst of this steady confusion of constantly varying sensations, sight interrupted by sound, sound mingling with sight, on this swaying, vibrating seat, quivering with the prolonged thrill of the earth, lapsed to a sort of pleasing numbness, in a sense, hypnotized by the weaving maze of things in which he found himself involved. To keep his team at an even, regular gait, maintaining the precise interval, to run his furrows as closely as possible to those already made by the plough in front—this for the moment was the entire sum of his duties. But while one part of his brain, alert and watchful, took cognisance of these matters, all the greater part was lulled and stupefied with the long monotony of the affair.

The ploughing, now in full swing, enveloped him in a vague, slow-moving whirl of things. Underneath him was the jarring, jolting, trembling machine; not a clod was turned, not an obstacle encountered, that he did not receive the swift impression of it through his body, the very friction of the damp soil, sliding incessantly from the shiny surface of the shears, seemed to reproduce itself in his fingertips and along the back of his head. He

heard the horse-hoofs by the myriads crushing down easily, deeply, into the loam, the prolonged clinking of trace-chains, the working of the smooth brown flanks in the harness, the clatter of wooden hames, the champing of bits, the click of iron shoes against pebbles, the brittle stubble of the surface ground crackling and snapping as the furrows turned, the sonorous, steady breaths wrenched from the deep, labouring chests, strap-bound, shining with sweat, and all along the line the voices of the men talking to the horses. Everywhere there were visions of glossy brown backs, straining, heaving, swollen with muscle; harness streaked with specks of froth, broad, cup-shaped hoofs, heavy with brown loam, men's faces red with tan, blue overalls spotted with axle-grease; muscled hands, the knuckles whitened in their grip on the reins, and through it all the ammoniacal smell of the horses, the bitter reek of perspiration of beasts and men, the aroma of warm leather, the scent of dead stubble—and stronger and more penetrating than everything else, the heavy, enervating odour of the upturned, living earth.

At intervals, from the top of one of the rare, low swells of the land, Vanamee overlooked a wider horizon. On the other divisions of the Quien Sabe the same work was in progress. Occasionally he could see another column of ploughs in the adjoining division—sometimes so close at hand that the subdued murmur of its movements reached his ear; sometimes so distant that it resolved itself into a long, brown streak upon the gray of the ground. Farther off to the west on the Osterman ranch other columns came and went and, once, from the crest of the highest swell on his division, Vanamee caught a distant glimpse of the Broderson ranch. There, too, moving specks indicated that the ploughing was under

way. And farther away still, far off there beyond the fine line of the horizons, over the curve of the globe, the shoulder of the earth, he knew were other ranches, and beyond these others, and beyond these still others, the immensities multiplying to infinity.

From *The Octopus*, by Frank Norris. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co. Used by permission.

CHAPTER V

Place Description

I

In the description of place—whether of a building or a locality—the first thing which must be determined by the writer is his point of view. That point of view, as has been said in an earlier chapter, may be physical or mental, but it must be clear and definite in the writer's mind, or he will never succeed in presenting to the reader the picture which he saw. The Thrums that Jean Myles in *Sentimental Tommy* remembered, she saw so clearly that her children knew every inch of it before their memorable visit to their mother's home; but it had been so colored by the memory of the lonely woman that in all their exploration, the disillusioned Tommy and Elspeth saw nothing worthy of comparison with London, save the great key of the little church. Remembrance may so color a house or a village that its picture loses all semblance to reality. But, at present, it is rather with the physical point of view that we are concerned. If a photographer is called on to take a picture of a house or public building, his first care must be to find the best point of vantage. So it is with the descriptive artist, though he has this advantage over the photographer that he may, at will, after he has given his first impression, lead his reader from one point of view to another.

An artist's realization of the need for choosing the best point of view may be seen in Poe's description of Landor's cottage. He says:

The point of view from which I first saw the cottage was not altogether, although it was nearly, the best point from which to survey the house. I will therefore describe it as I afterwards saw it—from a position on the stone wall at the southern extreme of the amphitheatre.

Then, having taken that position, Poe proceeds to his description, and his reader visualizes the scene without difficulty.

One of the best of all points of view for describing a building is a first view at sufficient distance to allow the observer to gain a totality of effect. The builders of the great European cathedrals knew that well, and so they placed the cathedrals, whenever possible, upon hills overlooking all the country round. Who can forget his first view of the spires of Chartres, when the train was yet some miles away from the town, or his last view of Lincoln, which, long after everything else in the town has disappeared, continues to dominate the whole countryside? The best of all views of Durham Cathedral is undoubtedly that from the bridge below, from which one looks up to see, rising from the trees, the church—"half house of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot." Stevenson emphasizes the advantages of lofty setting in his account of the approach to Noyon Cathedral:

Noyon stands about a mile from the river, in a little plain surrounded by wooden hills, and entirely covers an eminence with its tile roofs, surmounted by a long, straight-backed cathedral with two stiff towers. As we got into the town, the tile roofs seemed to tumble up-hill, one upon another, in the oddest disorder; but for all their scrambling, they did not attain above the knees of the cathedral which stood, upright and solemn, over all.

Ruskin, when he wishes to describe St. Mark's, has no such aid as a lofty situation for his cathedral; but he produces much the same dramatic effect by a long approach in which he leads the reader along narrow streets of Venice, past tiny shops, past the hostelry of the Black Eagle, into the shadow of pillars, between which

there opens a great light, and in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark's seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of chequered stones; and on each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order.

Ralph Adams Cram achieves the same general impression in his picture of the temple of Koshoji: ¹

There is a river road up to where the tumbling Ujigawa bursts through a cleft in the hills, and following this one suddenly comes upon a long straight path cut through dense black trees, rising steep from the river, and closed at the summit by a gleaming white Korean gateway. As one approaches, nothing is visible but this same gate with its arched opening in the white plastered base, surmounted by the intricate bracketing of its carved roof, long, plastered walls reaching away on either hand, and above, the low sweeping roof, or gray-green tile, and in April, as when I saw it, a great cloud of pink vapor poised over it all, the amazing blossoming of an ancient cherry. One comes out from under the white arch with a sudden catching of the breath.

Not all buildings have the advantage of natural setting which cathedrals and temples boast. Nevertheless it is always possible to find an effective point of view from which to describe. Poe, in the opening paragraph of the *Fall of the House of Usher*, pictures his character as reining horse at first sight of the melancholy dwelling, and gloomily surveying it. David Copperfield's first

¹ *Impressions of Japanese Architecture.*

view of the romantic boat-house came after a journey on Ham's back through most uninteresting surroundings:

I looked away in all directions, as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black barge, or some other kind of superannuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily; but nothing else in the way of a habitation that was visible to *me*.

A very different point of view is that used by George Eliot in her description of the Hall Farm in *Adam Bede*, and by J. M. Barrie in his picture of the Painted Lady's house in *Sentimental Tommy*, in the latter case for an interior, in the former for both exterior and interior. The Hall Farm has run to seed to such an extent that the great gate can no longer be opened; George Eliot suggests that it would not be difficult to climb over the wall, but a still easier way suggests itself: "by putting our eyes close to the rusty bars of the gate, we can see the house well enough and all but the very corners of the grassy enclosure." In the same way, Tommy and Elspeth, fearful yet fascinated, creep nearer and nearer to the Painted Lady's house until they can peer through the window.

The problem of the point of view is not very different in describing interiors. One cannot, of course, gain the same perspective, but, since the picture is more limited, perspective is not so important. Sometimes the author manages a gradual view of the room by depicting his character as coming out of the brilliant sunlight into a darkened room, or as fumbling in the dusk for a light; such a device—a suggestion of which we have already seen in Browning's *Saul*—allows a vague first impression, followed by a clear and definite second impression.

Herman Melville, in describing the Spouter-Inn in *Moby Dick*, uses the dim light and wavering shadows to deepen the sense of mystery about the old tavern. An excellent point of view for an interior is that used by Hawthorne in his description of a room in the Pyncheon House into which Miss Hephzibah Pyncheon stepped from the "dusky, time-darkened passage." As she stands frowning near-sightedly at a picture on the wall, the author is given an opportunity to visualize the scene before her.

After the point of view has been determined, the next important question for the writer to consider is the mood or character of the whole which he wishes to convey. Sometimes the mood will be identical with his first impression; at other times, however, continued observation may cause him to change. Thomas Burke in his description of the Chinese Quarter in *Nights in London* at first uses the adjective *chaste* to express the impression which the district gave him; but, as he comes to examine the details of the scene, he finds that that is, of all adjectives, the least apt. Sometimes the mood may be the author's, which he always reads into the place; thus Hawthorne says of the House of the Seven Gables:

The aspect of the venerable mansion has always affected me like a human countenance, bearing the traces not merely of outward storm and sunshine, but expressive, also, of the long lapse of mortal life, and accompanying vicissitudes that have passed within.

The romantic attraction of the Peggotty house grows upon the youthful David as he comes nearer and nearer to it, and finds expression in such adjectives as "*delightful door*," "*wonderful charm*," "*perfect abode*." Lafcadio Hearn, in his description of a Creole house, constantly contrasts the coldness and cheerlessness of today with the glamour of that great period when the carriages thundered

under the archway; he typifies the change which has come about by means of the "hoary dog" that "sleeps like a stone sphinx at a corner of the broad stairway," dreaming of a Creole master who went out with Beauregard or Lee. In Galsworthy's description of the "emancipated house" of the Monts in the *White Monkey* also, a dog is used as a device to fix the artificial mood of the entire room.

Another point which may be stressed with effective result, in the description of a building, is its relation to the surroundings. Here the devices of repetition and contrast, so valuable in all writing, are well employed. The house may seem to be such an essential part of the country or the landscape in which it is seen that one repeats the mood of the other; or it may seem strangely out of place, and the incongruity will serve to emphasize the spectator's feeling, whether that be of peace or of terror. The House of Usher reflects all the gloom and the mystery of the district in which it is found; the run-down old ranch house in W. H. Hudson's *Purple Land* is repeated both in the broken old man within it, and the woman in rusty black who stands at the gate. In the descriptions of Hardy and of Dickens, as a rule, the houses are an integral part of their surroundings. The English cathedral which Ruskin uses for contrast with St. Mark's is as northern in its setting and atmosphere as the Venetian one is southern, a point which Ruskin emphasizes most of all by the birds which fly around the two buildings:

Instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark's porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

Interiors are, as a whole, more significant than exteriors. Rooms reflect—sometimes influence—the characters of those who live in them. The color schemes, the type of furniture, the rugs on the floor, the pictures on the wall, the books in the cases—all are indicative of personality, and the author must select those details which will most unerringly indicate the chief characteristics of the characters who live in the rooms. The value and the significance—and the danger!—of details in furnishing is delightfully illustrated in Logan Pearsall Smith's sketch, "Mrs. Backe":¹

Mrs. Backe would be down in a few minutes, so I waited in the drawing-room of this new acquaintance who had so kindly invited me to tea.

It is indiscreet, but I cannot help it; if I am left alone in a room, I cannot help peering about at the pictures and ornaments and books. Interiors, the habitations people make for their souls, are so fascinating, and tell so much; they interest me like sea-shells or the nests of birds.

"A lover of Switzerland," I inferred. "Has travelled much in the East—the complete works of Canon Farrar—that big bust, with whiskers, is Mendelssohn, no doubt. Good Heavens! a stuffed cat! And that Moorish plaque is rather awful. Still some of the nicest people have no taste. . . ."

Then I saw the clock. One look at that pink china clock with the face of a monkey was enough. Softly from that drawing-room, softly I stole down stairs, and closed the front door of that house softly behind me.

II

The description of localities offers a much more difficult problem than that of mere exteriors and interiors. Places have personalities, as do people, and afford even more striking paradoxes. A street, a city square, a country lane, a city slum, even a city itself, challenges the

¹ From *More Trivia*, Harcourt, Brace & Co. Quoted by permission of Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith.

descriptive ability of a writer. There are people, to be sure, who feel no essential difference between places; sea-captains who have sailed the world over and know no more of places than harbors and exports; professional travelers to whom a new place is not an adventure but a monotonous repetition. Much is said—justly, no doubt—about the sameness of American cities; particularly in the middle west and far west, where the streets have, as a rule, been laid out with some degree of regularity, one can find his way about one city because of his acquaintance with others of the same type. Yet cities are not more alike than human beings; and as we come to know an individual, we are impressed not so much by his likeness to as by his difference from other people. It is so with places. There is no locality which does not have interest in the eyes of those who look for it.

There has been, during the last few years, a great interest in America in place description. Foreign travelers who have visited this country since the war have—almost without exception—written books in which they have described, with more rather than less frankness, our dress, our manners, our architecture, our characters. Even the most casual observations of strangers are not without their value; some of the foreign critics succeeded in giving us pictures of our cities which challenged attention, and which, indeed, in a few cases made us see our surroundings as if discovering them anew. Such were some of the descriptions in Gilbert Chesterton's *What I Saw In America*. But the description of America has been by no means confined to visitors. We have always had in this country some feeling for "local color," a feeling which has grown steadily stronger with the years and with our expanding boundaries. At first divided almost equally between the New England and the South-

ern states, that interest swung with Bret Harte and his followers to the "wild west" of mining camps and gold rushes, and with O. Henry back to the New York of the "four million." Hamlin Garland in his *Main Travelled Roads* did pioneer service in arousing interest in the literary possibilities of the Middle West, with the result that during the last ten years Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota have figured largely in the interest of the reading public—an interest which reached a climax with the publication of Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street*. Still more recently Hawaii and the South Sea Islands have become the favorite scenes of novel writers. In nearly all our novels and tales of local color, the locality is all-important, often playing a distinct part in making or marring human nature. The power which lies in the spirit of locality can be seen at its height in the novels of Joseph Conrad, whose chief character is always the sea—the sea in more moods than any one individual ever possessed, a potent influence in the lives of the men who follow it; and in the novels of Thomas Hardy, to whom nature is not only the reflection of the mind of man—as it is in the scene on the heath in Shakespeare's *King Lear*—but the dominating force in his life. Egdon Heath governs the lives of the characters in *The Return of the Native*, reflects their nature, and is reflected by them. "It is at present a place," writes Hardy, "perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly; neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and, withal, singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony."

In the description of localities, the insight and the understanding of the observer are of primary importance, for places are what they seem to the one who sees them; association and understanding color them and give them

form. The "Den" of Thrums, that trysting-place of young people for generations, seemed, to little Tommy and Elspeth, but a hollow in the ground in which was a "narsty pool," though later it was to be to them the scene of enchantment in which they would bring back the days of the Jacobites. But, as Barrie shows, that same Den could be many different places to those who explored it:

Its size depends on you and the maid. If she be with you, the Den is so large that you must rest here and there; if you are after her boldly, you can dash to the Cuttle Well, which was the trysting-place, in the time a stout man takes to lace his boots; if you are of those self-conscious ones, who look behind to see whether jeering blades are following, you may crouch and wriggle your way onward, and not be with her in half an hour.

Many of our informal essayists today are turning for subjects to the discovery and exploration of the towns in which they live. What Lamb did for the Inner Temple, the South Sea House, and Blakesmoor in H—shire, and what Stevenson did for Edinburgh,—and, indeed, for most of the places in which he lived—contemporary essayists such as A. Edward Newton, E. V. Lucas, and in very different mood, Thomas Burke, are doing for London, and Christopher Morley, Simeon Strunsky, and Robert Cortes Holliday and others are doing for New York and Philadelphia.

The localities in which one wanders at will need not necessarily be contemporaneous, or even real. The Thrums which Barrie has made famous is the village of his mother's childhood, which had largely vanished before his own birth. Alfred Noyes, in his *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, stumbles upon a little street, in which he sees against the sky the gracious figure of Sir Walter Raleigh, and hears the infectious ring of an Elizabethan

song. Walter de la Mare's discovery of "Thrae" is our own discovery of "Earth"; and the Dreamthorp in which Alexander Smith chose to live had no more real existence (and no less!) than the Arcadian pastures in which Theocritean shepherds piped to their flocks.

EXTERIORS

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon Street; the house is the old Pyncheon house; and an elm-tree, of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town-born child by the title of the Pyncheon Elm. . . . The aspect of the venerable mansion has always affected me like a human countenance, bearing the traces not merely of outward storm and sunshine, but expressive, also, of the long lapse of mortal life, and accompanying vicissitudes that have passed within. . . .

Maule's Lane, or Pyncheon Street, as it were now more decorous to call it, was thronged, at the appointed hour, as with a congregation on its way to church. All, as they approached, looked upward at the imposing edifice, which was henceforth to assume its rank among the habitations of mankind. There it rose, a little withdrawn from the line of the street, but in pride, not modesty. Its whole visible exterior was ornamented with quaint figures, conceived in the grotesqueness of a Gothic fancy, and drawn or stamped in the glittering plaster,

composed of lime, pebbles, and bits of glass, with which the woodwork of the walls was overspread. On every side, the seven gables pointed sharply towards the sky, and presented the aspect of a whole sisterhood of edifices, breathing through the spiracles of one great chimney. The many lattices, with their small, diamond-shaped panes, admitted the sunlight into hall and chamber, while, nevertheless, the second story, projecting far over the base, and itself retiring beneath the third, threw a shadowy and thoughtful gloom into the lower rooms. Carved globes of wood were affixed under the jutting stories. Little spiral rods of iron beautified each of the seven peaks. On the triangular portion of the gable, that fronted next the street, was a dial, put up that very morning, on which the sun was still marking the passage of the first bright hour in the history that was not destined to be all so bright. All around were scattered shavings, chips, shingles, and broken halves of bricks; these, together with the lately turned earth, on which the grass had not begun to grow, contributed to the impression of strangeness and novelty proper to a house that had yet its place to make among men's daily interests.

The principal entrance, which had almost the breadth of a church-door, was in the angle between the two front gables, and was covered by an open porch, with benches beneath its shelter. Under this arched doorway, scraping their feet on the unworn threshold, now trod the clergymen, the elders, the magistrates, the deacons, and whatever of aristocracy there was in town or country. Thither, too, thronged the plebeian classes, as freely as their betters, and in larger number. Just within the entrance, however, stood two serving-men, pointing some of the guests to the neighborhood of the kitchen, and

ushering others into the statelier rooms,—hospitable alike to all, but still with a scrutinizing regard to the high or low degree of each.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*. By permission of, and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

THE HALL FARM

Evidently that gate is never opened, for the long grass and the great hemlocks grow close against it; and if it were opened, it is so rusty that the force necessary to turn it on its hinges would be likely to pull down the square stone-built pillars, to the detriment of the two stone lionesses which grin with a doubtful carnivorous affability above a coat of arms surmounting each of the pillars. It would be easy enough, by the aid of the nicks in the stone pillars, to climb over the brick wall with its smooth stone coping; but by putting our eyes close to the rusty bars of the gate, we can see the house well enough, and all but the very corners of the grassy enclosure.

It is a very fine old place, of red brick, softened by a pale powdery lichen, which has dispersed itself with happy irregularity, so as to bring the red brick into terms of friendly companionship with the limestone ornaments surrounding the three gables, the windows, and the door-place. But the windows are patched with wooden panes, and the door, I think, is like the gate—it is never opened: how it would groan and grate against the stone floor if it were! For it is a solid, heavy, handsome door, and must once have been in the habit of shutting with a sonorous bang behind a liveried lackey, who had just seen his master and mistress off the grounds in a carriage and pair.

But at present one might fancy the house in the early stage of a chancery suit, and that the fruit from that grand double row of walnut-trees on the right hand of the enclosure would fall and rot among the grass, if it were not that we heard the booming bark of dogs echoing from great buildings at the back. And now the half-weaned calves that have been sheltering themselves in a gorse-built hovel against the left-hand wall, come out and set up a silly answer to that terrible bark, doubtless supposing that it has reference to buckets of milk.

Yes, the house must be inhabited, and we will see by whom: for imagination is a licensed trespasser,—it has no fear of dogs, but may climb over walls and peep in at windows with impunity. Put your face to one of the glass panes in the right-hand window: what do you see? A large open fireplace, with rusty dogs in it, and a bare boarded floor; at the far end, fleeces of wool stacked up; in the middle of the floor, some empty corn-bags. That is the furniture of the dining-room. And what through the left-hand window? Several clothes-horses, a pillion, a spinning-wheel, and an old box wide open, and stuffed full of coloured rags. At the edge of this box there lies a great wooden doll, which, so far as mutilation is concerned, bears a strong resemblance to the finest Greek sculpture, and especially in the total loss of its nose. Near it there is a little chair, and the butt-end of a boy's leather long-lashed whip.

The history of the house is plain now. It was once the residence of a country squire, whose family, probably dwindled down to mere spinsterhood, got merged in the more territorial name of Donnithorne. It was once the Hall; it is now the Hall Farm. Like the life in some coast-town that was once a watering-place and is now a port, where the genteel streets are silent and grass-grown,

and the docks and warehouses busy and resonant, the life at the Hall has changed its focus, and no longer radiates from the parlour, but from the kitchen and the farmyard.

Plenty of life there! though this is the drowsiest time of year, just before hay-harvest; and it is the drowsiest time of the day too, for it is close upon three by the sun, and it is half-past three by Mrs. Poyser's handsome eight-day clock. But there is always a stronger sense of life when the sun is brilliant after rain; and now he is pouring down his beams, and making sparkles among the wet straw, and lighting up every patch of vivid green moss on the red tiles of the cow-shed, and turning even the muddy water that is hurrying along the channel to the drain into a mirror for the yellow-billed ducks, who are seizing the opportunity of getting a drink with as much body in it as possible. There is quite a concert of noises; the great bull-dog, chained against the stables, is thrown into furious exasperation by the unwary approach of a cock too near the mouth of his kennel, and sends forth a thundering bark which is answered by two fox-hounds shut up in the opposite cow-house; the old top-knotted hens, scratching with their chicks among the straw, set up a sympathetic croaking as the discomfited cock joins them; a sow with her brood, all very muddy as to legs, and curled as to the tail, throws in some deep staccato notes; our friends the calves are bleating from the home croft; and, under all, a fine ear discerns the continuous hum of human voices.

George Eliot, *Adam Bede*.

ST. MARK'S

And now I wish that the reader, before I bring him into St. Mark's Place, would imagine himself for a little

time in a quiet English cathedral town, and walk with me to the west front of its cathedral. Let us go together up the more retired street, at the end of which we can see the pinnacles of one of the towers, and then, through the low grey gateway, with its battlemented top and small latticed window in the centre, into the inner private-looking road or close, where nothing goes in but the carts of the tradesmen who supply the bishop and the chapter, and where there are little shaven grass-plots, fenced in by neat rails, before old-fashioned groups of somewhat diminutive and excessively trim houses, with little oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, and deep wooden cornices and eaves painted cream colour and white, and small porches to their doors in the shape of cockle-shells, or little, crooked, thick, indescribable wooden gables, warped a little on one side; and so forward till we come to larger houses, also old-fashioned, but of red brick, and with gardens behind them, and fruit walls, which show here and there, among the nectarines, the vestiges of an old cloister arch or shaft, and looking in front on the cathedral square itself, laid out in rigid divisions of smooth grass and gravel walk, yet not uncheerful, especially on the sunny side, where the canon's children are walking with their nurserymaids. And so, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there stand for a time, looking up at its deep-pointed porches and the dark places between their pillars where there were statues once, and where the fragments, here and there, of a stately figure are still left, which has in it the likeness of a king, perhaps indeed a king on earth, perhaps a saintly king long ago in heaven; and so, higher and higher up to the great mouldering wall of rugged sculpture and confused arcades, shattered, and grey, and grisly with heads of dragons and mocking

fiends, worn by the rain and swirling winds into yet unseemlier shape, and coloured on their stony scales by the deep russet-orange lichen, melancholy gold; and so, higher still, to the bleak towers, so far above that the eye loses itself among the bosses of their traceries, though they are rude and strong, and only sees like a drift of eddying black points, now closing, now scattering, and now settling suddenly into invisible places among the bosses and flowers, the crowd of restless birds that fill the whole square with that strange clangour of theirs, so harsh and yet so soothing, like the cries of birds on a solitary coast between the cliffs and sea.

Think for a little while of that scene, and the meaning of all its small formalisms, mixed with its serene sublimity. Estimate its secluded, continuous, drowsy felicities, and its evidence of the sense and steady performance of such kind of duties as can be regulated by the cathedral clock; and weigh the influence of those dark towers on all who have passed through the lonely square at their feet for centuries, and on all who have seen them rising far away over the wooded plain, or catching on their square masses the last rays of the sunset, when the city at their feet was indicated only by the mist at the bend of the river. And then let us quickly recollect that we are in Venice, and land at the extremity of the Calle Lunga San Moisè, which may be considered as there answering to the secluded street that led us to our English cathedral gateway.

We find ourselves in a paved alley, some seven feet wide where it is widest, full of people, and resonant with cries of itinerant salesmen,—a shriek in their beginning, and dying away into a kind of brazen ringing, all the worse for its confinement between the high houses of the passage along which we have to make our way. Over-

head, an inextricable confusion of rugged shutters, and iron balconies and chimney flues, pushed out on brackets to save room, and arched windows with projecting sills of Istrian stone, and gleams of green leaves here and there where a fig-tree branch escapes over a lower wall from some inner cortile, leading the eye up to the narrow stream of blue sky high over all. On each side, a row of shops, as densely set as may be, occupying, in fact, intervals between the square stone shafts, about eight feet high, which carry the first floors: . . . the light in all cases entering at the front only, and fading away in a few feet from the threshold into a gloom which the eye from without cannot penetrate, but which is generally broken by a ray or two from a feeble lamp at the back of the shop, suspended before a print of the Virgin. The less pious shopkeeper sometimes leaves his lamp unlighted, and is contented with a penny print; the more religious one has his print coloured and set in a little shrine with a gilded or figured fringe, with perhaps a faded flower or two on each side, and his lamp burning brilliantly. Here, at the fruiterer's, where the dark-green water-melons are heaped upon the counter like cannon-balls, the Madonna has a tabernacle of fresh laurel leaves; but the pewterer next door has let his lamp out, and there is nothing to be seen in his shop but the dull gleam of the studded patterns on the copper pans, hanging from his roof in the darkness. . . .

A yard or two farther, we pass the hostelry of the Black Eagle, and, glancing as we pass through the square door of marble, deeply moulded, in the outer wall, we see the shadows of its pergola of vines resting on an ancient well, with a pointed shield carved on its side; and so presently emerge on the bridge and Campo San Moisè, whence to the entrance into St. Mark's Place, called the

Bocca di Piazza . . . the Venetian character is nearly destroyed. . . . We will push fast through them into the shadow of the pillars at the end of the "Bocca di Piazza," and then we forget them all; for between those pillars there opens a great light, and in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark's seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of chequered stones; and, on each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order, and all their rude casements and broken walls had been transformed into arches charged with goodly sculpture, and fluted shafts of delicate stone.

And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of coloured light; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber and delicate as ivory—sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes; and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptered, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indiscreet among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago.

And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, 'their bluest veins to kiss'—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs, all beginning and ending in the Cross; and above them in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven, and the labours of men, each in its appointed season upon the earth; and above these, another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers—a confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the St. Mark's Lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst.

Between that grim cathedral of England and this, what an interval! There is a type of it in the very birds that haunt them; for, instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark's porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

A RANCH HOUSE

On approaching the house I saw that there had formerly been a large plantation behind it, of which only a few dead stumps now remained, the ditches that had enclosed them being now nearly obliterated. The place was ruinous and overgrown with weeds. Dismounting, I led my horse along a narrow path through a perfect wilderness of wild sunflowers, horehound, red-wood, and thorn-apple, up to some poplar trees where there had once been a gate, of which only two or three broken posts remained standing in the ground. From the old gate the path ran on, still through weeds, to the door of the house, which was partly of stone and partly of red brick, with a very steep, sloping tiled roof. Beside the ruined gate, leaning against a post, with the hot afternoon sun shining on her uncovered head, stood a woman in a rusty-black dress. She was about twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, and had an unutterably weary, desponding expression on her face, which was colourless as marble, except for the purple stains under her large dark eyes. She did not move when I approached her, but raised her sorrowful eyes to my face, apparently feeling little interest in my arrival. . . .

By this time we had reached the house. There had once been a verandah to it, but this had long fallen away, leaving the walls, doors, and windows exposed to sun and rain. Lichen covered the stone walls, while in the crevices and over the tiled roof weeds and grass had flourished; but this vegetation had died with the summer heats and was now parched and yellow. She led me into a spacious room, so dimly lighted from the low door and one small window that it seemed quite dark to me coming from the bright sunlight. I stood for a few

moments trying to accustom my eyes to the gloom, while she, advancing to the middle of the apartment, bent down and spoke to an aged man seated in a leather-bound easy-chair . . .

There before me sat a tall, bent old man, wasted almost to a skeleton, with a grey, desolate face and long hair and beard of a silver whiteness. He was wrapped in a light-coloured poncho, and wore a black skull-cap on his head. When I spoke he leant back in his seat and began scanning my face with strangely fierce eager eyes, all the time twisting his long thin fingers together in a nervous, excited manner.

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A CREOLE HOUSE

Let me give you a description of my new residence. I never knew what the beauty of an old Creole home was until now. I do not believe one could find anything more picturesque outside of Venice or Florence. . . . The building is on St. Louis Street, a street several hundred years old. I enter by a huge archway about a hundred feet long,—full of rolling echoes, and commencing to become verdant with a thin growth of bright moss. At the end, the archway opens into a court. There are a few graceful bananas here with their giant leaves splitting in ribbons in the summer sun, so that they look like young palms. Lord! How the carriages must have thundered under that archway and through the broad paved court in the old days. The stables are here still; but the blooded horses are gone, and the family carriage, with its French coat of arms, has disappeared. There is only

a huge wagon left to crumble to pieces. A hoary dog sleeps like a stone sphinx at a corner of the broad stairway; and I fancy that in his still slumbers he might be dreaming of a Creole master who went out with Beauregard or Lee and never came back again. Wonder if the great greyhound is waiting for him.

The dog never notices me. I am not of his generation, and I creep quietly by lest I might disturb his dreams of the dead South. I go up the huge stairway. At every landing a vista of broad archways reëchoes my steps—archways that once led to rooms worthy of a prince. But the rooms are now cold and cheerless and vast with emptiness. Tinted in pale green or yellow, with a ceiling moulded with Renaissance figures in plaster, the ghost of luxury and wealth seems trying to linger in them. I pass them by, and taking my way through an archway on the right, find myself on a broad piazza, at the end of which is my room.

It is vast enough for a Carnival ball. Five windows and glass doors open flush with the floor and rise to the ceilings. They open on two sides upon the piazza, whence I have a far view of tropical gardens and masses of building, half-ruined but still magnificent. The walls are tinted pale orange colour; green curtains drape the doors and windows; and the mantelpiece, surmounted by a long oval mirror of Venetian pattern, is of white marble veined like the bosom of a Naiad. In the centre of the huge apartment rises a bed as massive as a fortress, with tremendous columns of carved mahogany supporting a curtained canopy at the height of sixteen feet. It seems to touch the ceiling, yet it does not. There is no carpet on the floor, no pictures on the wall,—a sense of something dead and lost fills the place with a gentle melancholy;—

the breezes play fantastically with the pallid curtains, and the breath of flowers ascends into the chamber from the verdant gardens below. Oh, the silence of this house, the perfume, and the romance of it. A beautiful young Frenchwoman appears once a day in my neighborhood to arrange the room; but she comes like a ghost and disappears too soon in the recesses of the awful house. I would like to speak with her, for her lips drop honey, and her voice is richly sweet like the cooing of a dove. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret hiding-places of the stairs, let me see thy face, let me hear thy voice, for thy voice is sweet and thy countenance is comely!"

Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, edited by Elizabeth Bisland. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

PEGGOTTY'S HOUSE

Ham carrying me on his back and a small box of ours under his arm, and Peggotty carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes bestrewn with bits of chips and little hillocks of sand, and went past gas-works, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, shipwrights' yards, ship-breakers' yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance; when Ham said:

"Yon's our house, Mas'r Davy!"

I looked in all directions, as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black

barge, or some other kind of supernnuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily; but nothing else in the way of a habitation that was visible to *me*.

"That's not it?" said I. "That ship-looking thing?"

"That's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham.

If it had been Aladdin's palace, roc's egg and all, I suppose I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it. There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it; but the wonderful charm of it was, that it was a real boat which had no doubt been upon the water hundreds of times, and which had never been intended to be lived in, on dry land. That was the captivation of it to me. If it had ever been meant to be lived in, I might have thought it small, or inconvenient, or lonely; but never having been designed for any such use, it became a perfect abode.

It was beautifully clean inside, and as tidy as possible. There was a table, and a Dutch clock, and a chest of drawers, and on the chest of drawers there was a tea-tray with a painting on it of a lady with a parasol, taking a walk with a military-looking child who was trundling a hoop. The tray was kept from tumbling down by a Bible; and the tray, if it had tumbled down, would have smashed a quantity of cups and saucers and a teapot that were grouped around the book. On the walls there were some common coloured pictures, framed and glazed, of Scripture subjects; such as I have never seen since in the hands of pedlars, without seeing the whole interior of Peggotty's brother's house again, at one view. Abraham in red going to sacrifice Isaac in blue, and Daniel in yellow cast into a den of green lions, were the most promi-

nent of these. Over the little mantle-shelf was a picture of the *Sarah Jane* lugger, built at Sunderland, with a real little wooden stern stuck on to it; a work of art, combining composition with carpentry, which I considered to be one of the most enviable possessions that the world could afford. There were some hooks in the beams of the ceiling, the use of which I did not divine then; and some lockers and boxes and conveniences of that sort, which served for seats and eked out the chairs.

All this, I saw in the first glance after I crossed the threshold—child-like, according to my theory—and then Peggotty opened a little door and showed me my bedroom. It was the completest and most desirable bedroom ever seen—in the stern of the vessel; with a little window, where the rudder used to go through; a little looking-glass, just the right height for me, nailed against the wall, and framed with oyster-shells; a little bed, which there was just room enough to get into; and a nose-gay of seaweed in a blue mug on the table. The walls were whitewashed as white as milk, and the patchwork counterpane made my eyes quite ache with its brightness. One thing I particularly noticed in this delightful house was the smell of fish; which was so searching, that when I took out my pocket-handkerchief to wipe my nose, I found it smelt exactly as if it had wrapped up a lobster. On my imparting this discovery in confidence to Peggotty, she informed me that her brother dealt in lobsters, crabs, and crawfish; and I afterwards found that a heap of these creatures, in a state of wonderful conglomeration with one another, and never leaving off pinching whatever they laid hold of, were usually to be found in a little wooden outhouse where the pots and kettles were kept.

INTERIORS

A VIRGINIA HABITATION

The habitation of the old Virginia gentleman—house is too short a word to express it—always large enough, however small it might be, was sometimes stately, like the great square house of “Rosewell” and others I might name. As a rule, to which, indeed, there were many exceptions, it was neither planned nor built—it grew: and that was its great charm. To be sure, the main structure or body of it had been put up with an eye not to convenience but to elbow-room and breathing space—without which no Virginian can live. But in the course of time, as the children came along, as the family connections increased, and as the desire, the necessity in fact, of keeping a free hotel grew upon him, the old gentleman kept adding a wing here and tacking a shed room there until the original building became mixed up, and, as it were, lost in the crowd of additions. In cold weather the old house was often miserably uncomfortable, but at all other times it was simply glorious. There was, of course, a large hall or passage, a parlor and dining-room, “the chamber” proper for the old lady and for everybody, and a fine old-time staircase leading to the guest-chambers, but the rest of the house ran mostly into nondescript apartments, access to which was not always easy. For the floors were on different levels, as they ought to be in an old country house. Fail to step up or down at the proper time, and you were sure to bump your head or bruise your shins. Then there were dark closets, cuddies, and big old chests that came mayhap from England, say nothing of the garret, full of mystery, that stretched the whole length of the house. Here was romance for child-

hood—plenty of it. These irregular rooms, two steps up and three down before you got fairly into them, teemed with poetry; but your modern houses, with square rooms all on a dead level, are prosaic as drygoods boxes.

A fine old house it was to play hide-and-seek in, to romp with the girls, to cut all sorts of capers without disturbing the old folks. Then these dark passages, these cuddies and closets, that big garret, never failed to harbor some good-natured old hip-shot fool of a family ghost, who was everlastingly “projicking” around at night, after the girls had quit their talk, making the floors crack, the doors creak, and whispering his nonsense through the keyhole, as if he could scare you or anybody else! To modernize the old Virginian’s house would kill that ghost, and if it be a crime to kill a live man, what an enormity it must be to kill one who has been dead a hundred years, who never harmed a living soul, and who, I suspect, was more fretted than sorry when the young ones would persist in hiding their heads under the bedclothes for fear of him! “You little geese! it’s nobody but me,” and “whish, whish, whish,” he would go on with his idiotic whispering.

The heavy, dark furniture; the huge sideboard; the quaint, solid chairs; the more common articles, with spraddled legs, scooped seats, and stick backs; the diamond-paned book-case; the long horse-hair sofas, with round tasselled pillows, hard as logs of ebony, with nooks to hide them in; the graceful candle-stand; the gilt mirror, with its three compartments; the carved mantel, so high you could hardly reach the silver candlesticks on its narrow top; the bureaux, with swinging brass handles; the dressing-tables; the high-post bedstead, with valance and tester; the——

But stay! it suddenly and painfully occurs to me—

there are grown-up men and women actually here, in this room, immortal beings, who never laid eyes on a bed-wrench and pin, and who do not so much as know the meaning of cording a bed! Think of it! Yet these people live on. Ah me! the fashion of this world passeth away!

The massive dinner table, never big enough to hold all the dishes, some of which had to go to the hearth to be kept warm; the old-time silver, the heavy cut glass-ware, the glass pitcher for the thick, rich milk—how it foamed when they “poured it high”—the Canton china, thin as thin biscuit; the plainer blue dinner set, for everyday use, with the big apples on the little trees, the blue islands in a white sea, the man or woman that was always going over that short bridge, but stopped and stood provokingly in the middle—how they all come back to you! But I “lay” you have forgotten the bandboxes. Think of that again! Bandboxes have fled away from the face of this earth, but not to heaven; for they were much uglier than any sin I’m acquainted with. I recall the very pattern of them—the red brick houses, with many windows, the clumsy trees, and that odd something, more like a pile of rocks than an elephant, but spouting clouds of water, like an elephant who had got drunk on mud.

George W. Bagby, *The Old Virginia Gentleman and Other Sketches*. Copyright by Charles Scribner’s Sons. By permission of the publishers.

BLEAK HOUSE

It was one of those delightfully irregular houses where you go up and down steps out of one room into another, and where you come upon more rooms when you think you have seen all there are, and where there is a bounti-

ful provision of little halls and passages, and where you find still older cottage-rooms in unexpected places, with lattice windows and green growth pressing through them. Mine, which we entered first, was of this kind, with an up-and-down roof, that had more corners in it than I ever counted afterwards, and a chimney (there was a wood-fire on the hearth) paved all round with pure white tiles, in every one of which a bright miniature of the fire was blazing. Out of this room, you went down two steps, into a charming little sitting-room, looking down upon a flower-garden, which room was henceforth to belong to Ada and me. Out of this you went up three steps, into Ada's bed-room, which had a fine broad window, commanding a beautiful view (we saw a great expanse of darkness lying underneath the stars), to which there was a hollow window-seat, in which, with a spring-lock, three dear Adas might have been lost at once. Out of this room, you passed into a little gallery, with which the other best rooms (only two) communicated, and so, by a little staircase of shallow steps, with a number of corner stairs in it, considering its length, down into the hall. But if, instead of going out of Ada's door, you came back into my room, and went out at the door by which you had entered it, and turned up a few crooked steps that branched off in an unexpected manner from the stairs, you lost yourself in passages, with mangles in them, and three-cornered tables, and a Native-Hindoo chair, which was also a sofa, a box, and a bedstead, and looked in every form, something between a bamboo skeleton and a great bird-cage, and had been brought from India nobody knew by whom or when. From these, you came on Richard's room, which was part library, part sitting-room, part bed-room, and seemed indeed a comfortable compound of many rooms. Out of that, you went

straight, with a little interval of passage, to the plain room where Mr. Jarndyce slept, all the year round, with his window open, his bedstead without any furniture standing in the middle of the floor for more air, and his cold-bath gaping for him in a smaller room adjoining. Out of that, you came into another passage, where there were back-stairs, and where you could hear the horses being rubbed down, outside the stable, and being told to Hold up, and Get over, as they slipped about very much on the uneven stones. Or you might, if you came out at another door (every room had at least two doors), go straight down to the hall again by half-a-dozen steps and a low archway, wondering how you got back there, or had ever got out of it.

The furniture, old-fashioned rather than old, like the house, was as pleasantly irregular. Ada's sleeping-room was all flowers—in chintz and paper, in velvet, in needle-work, in the brocade of two stiff courtly chairs, which stood, each attended by a little page of a stool for greater state, on either side of the fireplace. Our sitting-room was green; and had, framed and glazed, upon the walls, numbers of surprising and surprised birds, staring out of pictures at a real trout in a case, as brown and shining as if it had been served with gravy; at the death of Captain Cook; and at the whole process of preparing tea in China, as depicted by Chinese artists. In my room there were oval engravings of the months—ladies hay-making, in short waists, and large hats tied under the chin, for June—smooth-legged noblemen, pointing, with cocked-hats, to village steeples, for October. Half-length portraits, in crayons, abounded all through the house; but were so dispersed that I found the brother of a youthful officer of mine in the china-closet, and the grey old age of my pretty young bride, with a flower in her

bodice, in the breakfast-room. As substitutes, I had four angels, of Queen Anne's reign, taking a complacent gentleman to heaven, in festoons, with some difficulty; and a composition, in needlework, representing fruit, a kettle, and an alphabet. All the movables, from the wardrobes to the chairs and tables, hangings, glasses, even to the pincushions and scent-bottles on the dressing-tables, displayed the same quaint variety. They agreed in nothing but their perfect neatness, their display of the whitest linen, and their storing-up, wheresoever the existence of a drawer, small or large, rendered it possible, of quantities of rose-leaves and sweet lavender. Such, with its illuminated windows, softened here and there by shadows of curtains, shining out upon the starlight night; with its light, and warmth, and comfort; with its hospitable jingle, at a distance, of preparations for dinner; with the face of its generous master brightening everything we saw; and just wind enough without to sound a low accompaniment to everything we heard; were our first impressions of Bleak House.

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*.

THE ANTIQUARY'S DEN

It was a lofty room of middling size, obscurely lighted by high, narrow, latticed windows. One end was entirely occupied by book-shelves, greatly too limited in space for the number of volumes placed upon them, which were, therefore, drawn up in ranks of two or three files deep, while numberless others littered the floor and the tables, amid a chaos of maps, engravings, scraps of parchment, bundles of paper, pieces of old armor, swords, dirks, helmets, and highland targets. Behind Mr. Oldbuck's seat (which was an ancient leather-covered easy-chair,

worn smooth by constant use) was a huge oaken cabinet, decorated at each corner with Dutch cherubs, having their little duck-wings displayed and great jolter-headed visages placed between them. The top of this cabinet was covered with busts and Roman lamps and *patera*, intermingled with one or two bronze figures. The walls of the apartment were partly clothed with grim old tapestry, representing the memorable story of Sir Gawaine's wedding, in which full justice was done to the ugliness of the Lothely Lady; although, to judge from his own looks, the gentle knight had less reason to be disgusted with the match on account of disparity of outward favor than the romancer has given us to understand. The rest of the room was panelled or wainscotted with black oak, against which hung two or three portraits in armor, being characters in Scottish history, favorites of Mr. Oldbuck, and as many in tie-wigs and laced coats, staring representatives of his own ancestors. A large old-fashioned oaken table was covered with a profusion of papers, parchments, books, and nondescript trinkets and gewgaws, which seemed to have little to recommend them besides rust and the antiquity which it indicates. In the midst of this wreck of ancient books and utensils, with a gravity equal to Marius among the ruins of Carthage, sat a large black cat, which to a superstitious eye might have represented the *genius loci*, the tutelary demon of the apartment. The floor, as well as the table and chairs, was overflowed by the same *mare magnum* of miscellaneous trumpery, where it would have been as impossible to find any individual article wanted as to put it to any use when discovered.

Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*.

A CHAMBER IN SHEPPERTON VICARAGE

But there was a chamber in Shepperton Vicarage which told a different story from that bare and cheerless dining-room,—a chamber never entered by any one besides Mr. Gilfil and old Martha the housekeeper, who, with David her husband as groom and gardener, formed the vicar's entire establishment. The blinds of this chamber were always down, except once a quarter, when Martha entered that she might air and clean it. She always asked Mr. Gilfil for the key, which he kept locked up in his bureau, and returned it to him when she had finished her task.

It was a touching sight that the daylight streamed in upon, as Martha drew aside the blinds and thick curtains, and opened the Gothic casement of the oriel window! On the little dressing-table there was a dainty looking-glass in a carved and gilt frame; bits of wax-candle were still in the branched sockets at the sides, and on one of these branches hung a little black laced kerchief; a faded satin pincushion, with the pins rusted in it, a scent-bottle, and a large green fan, lay on the table; and on a dressing-box by the side of the glass was a work-basket, and an unfinished baby-cap, yellow with age, lying in it. Two gowns, of a fashion long forgotten, were hanging on nails against the door, and a pair of tiny red slippers, with a bit of tarnished embroidery on them, were standing at the foot of the bed. Two or three water-color drawings, views of Naples, hung upon the walls; and over the mantelpiece, above some bits of rare old china, two miniatures in oval frames. One of these miniatures represented a young man about seven-and-twenty, with a sanguine complexion, full lips, and clear candid gray eyes. The other was the likeness of a girl

probably not more than eighteen, with small features, thin cheeks, a pale southern-looking complexion, and large dark eyes. The gentleman wore powder; the lady had her dark hair gathered away from her face, and a little cap, with a cherry-coloured bow, set on the top of her head,—a coquettish head-dress, but the eyes spoke of sadness rather than of coquetry.

George Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*.

A ROOM IN THE PYNCHION HOUSE

A few more footsteps to and fro; and here, at last, . . . here comes Miss Hephzibah Pyncheon! Forth she steps into the dusky, time-darkened passage; a tall figure, clad in black silk, with a long and shrunken waist, feeling her way towards the stairs like a near-sighted person, as in truth she is.

The sun, meanwhile, if not already above the horizon, was ascending nearer and nearer to its verge. A few clouds, floating high upward, caught some of the earliest light, and threw down its golden gleam on the windows of all the houses in the street, not forgetting the House of the Seven Gables, which—many such sunrises as it had witnessed—looked cheerfully at the present one. The reflected radiance served to show, pretty distinctly, the aspect and arrangement of the room which Hephzibah entered, after descending the stairs. It was a low-studded room, with a beam across the ceiling, panelled with dark wood, and having a large chimney-piece, set round with pictured tiles, but now closed by an iron fire-board, through which ran the funnel of a modern stove. There was a carpet on the floor, originally of rich texture, but

so worn and faded, in these latter years, that its once brilliant figure had quite vanished into one indistinguishable hue. In the way of furniture, there were two tables; one, constructed with perplexing intricacy and exhibiting as many feet as a centipede; the other, more delicately wrought, with four long and slender legs, so apparently frail that it was almost incredible what a length of time the ancient tea-table had stood upon them. Half a dozen chairs stood about the room, straight and stiff, and so ingeniously contrived for the discomfort of the human person that they were irksome even to sight, and conveyed the ugliest possible idea of the state of society to which they could have been adapted. One exception there was, however, in a very antique elbow-chair, with a high back, carved elaborately in oak, and a roomy depth within its arms, that made up, by its spacious comprehensiveness, for the lack of any of those artistic curves which abound in a modern chair.

As for ornamental articles of furniture, we recollect but two, if such they may be called. One was a map of the Pyncheon territory at the eastward, not engraved, but the handiwork of some skilful old draughtsman, and grotesquely illuminated with pictures of Indians and wild beasts, among which was seen a lion; the natural history of the region being as little known as its geography, which was put down most fantastically awry. The other adornment was the portrait of old Colonel Pyncheon, at two-thirds length, representing the stern features of a Puritanic-looking personage, in a skull-cap, with a laced band and a grizzly beard; holding a Bible with one hand, and in the other uplifting an iron sword-hilt. The latter object, being more successfully depicted by the artist, stood out in far greater prominence than the sacred

volume. Face to face with this picture, on entering the apartment, Miss Hephzibah Pyncheon came to a pause.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *House of the Seven Gables*. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

THE PAINTED LADY'S HOUSE

The window fascinated him; he knew he should never find courage to come here again, and he glided toward it, signing Elspeth to accompany him. They were now too near Double Dykes for speaking to be safe, but he tapped his head as a warning to her to remove her hat, for a woman's head-gear always reaches a window in front of its wearer, and he touched his cold iron and passed it to her as if it were a snuff-mull. Thus fortified, they approached the window fearfully, holding hands and stepping high, like a couple in a minuet.

It had been the ordinary dwelling room of the unknown poor, the mean little "end"—ah, no, no, the noblest chamber in the annals of the Scottish nation. Here on a hard anvil has its character been fashioned and its history made at rush-lights and its God ever most prominent. Always within reach of hands which trembled with reverence as they turned its broad page could be found the Book that is compensation for all things, and that was never more at home than on bare dressers and worm-eaten looms. . . .

But though still recalling its past, the kitchen into which Tommy and Elspeth peered was trying successfully to be something else. The plate-rack had been a fixture, and the coffin-bed and the wooden bole, or board in the wall, with its round hole through which you thrust your hand when you wanted salt, and instead of a real mantel-

piece there was a quaint imitation one painted over the fireplace. There were some pieces of furniture, too, such as were usual in rooms of the kind, but most of them, perhaps in ignorance, had been put to novel uses, like the plate-rack, where the Painted Lady kept her many pretty shoes instead of her crockery. Gossip said she had a looking-glass of such prodigious size that it stood on the floor, and Tommy nudged Elspeth to signify, "There it is!" Other nudges called her attention to the carpet, the spinet, a chair that rocked like a cradle, and some smaller oddities, of which the queerest was a monster velvet glove hanging on the nail that by rights belonged to the bellows. The Painted Lady always put on this glove before she would touch the coals, which diverted Tommy, who knew that common folks lift coals with their bare hands, while society uses the fringe of its second petticoat.

It might have been a boudoir through which a kitchen and bedroom had wandered, spilling by the way, but though the effect was tawdry, everything had been rubbed clean by that passionate housewife, Grizel. She was on her knees at present, ca'ming the hearthstone a beautiful blue, and sometimes looking round to address her mother, who was busy among her plants and cut flowers. Surely they were know-nothings who called this woman silly, and blind who said she painted. It was a little face all of one colour, dingy pale, not chubby, but retaining the soft contours of a child's face, and the features were singularly delicate. She was clad in a soft gray, and her figure was of the smallest; there was such an air of youth about her that Tommy thought she could become a girl again by merely shortening her frock, not such a girl as gaunt Grizel, though, who would have looked a little woman had she let her frock down. In

appearance indeed the Painted Lady resembled her plain daughter not at all, but in manner in a score of ways, as when she rocked her arms joyously at sight of a fresh bud or tossed her brown hair from her brow with a pretty gesture that ought, God knows, to have been for some man to love. The watchers could not hear what she and Grizel said, but evidently it was pleasant converse, and mother and child, happy in each other's company, presented a picture as sweet as it is common, though some might have complained that they were doing each other's work.

James Matthew Barrie, *Sentimental Tommy*.
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THE DOVECOT

The Dovecot was a prim little cottage standing back from the steepest brae in Thrums and hidden by high garden walls, to the top of which another boy's shoulders were, for apple-lovers, but one step up. Jargonelle trees grew against the house, stretching their arms around it as if to measure its girth, and it was also remarkable for several "dumb" windows with the most artful blinds painted on them. Miss Ailie's fruit was famous, but she loved her flowers best, and for long a notice-board in her garden said, appealingly: "Persons who come to steal the fruit are requested not to walk on the flower-beds." It was that old bachelor, Dr. McQueen, who suggested this inscription to her, and she could never understand why he chuckled every time he read it.

There were seven rooms in the house, but only two were of public note, the school-room, which was downstairs, and the blue-and-white room above. The school-room was so long that it looked very low in the ceiling,

and it had a carpet, and on the walls were texts as well as maps. Miss Ailie's desk was in the middle of the room, and there was another desk in the corner; a cloth had been hung over it, as one covers a cage to send the bird to sleep. Perhaps Miss Ailie thought that a bird had once sung there, for this had been the desk of her sister, Miss Kitty, who died years before Tommy came to Thrums. . . .

The pupils had to bring handkerchiefs to the Dovecot, which led to its being called the Hanky School, and in time these handkerchiefs may be said to have assumed a religious character, though their purpose was merely to protect Miss Ailie's carpet. She opened each scholastic day by reading fifteen verses from the Bible, and then said sternly, "Hankies!" whereupon her pupils whipped out their handkerchiefs, spread them on the floor and kneeled on them while Miss Ailie repeated the Lord's Prayer. School closed at four o'clock, again with hankies.

Only on great occasions were the boys and girls admitted to the blue-and-white room, when they were given shortbread, but had to eat it with their heads flung back so that no crumbs should fall. Nearly everything in this room was blue or white, or both. There were white blinds and blue curtains, a blue table-cover and a white crumb-cloth, a white sheepskin with a blue footstool on it, blue chairs dotted with white buttons. Only white flowers came into this room, where there were blue vases for them, not a book was to be seen without a blue alpaca cover. Here Miss Ailie received visitors in her white with the blue braid, and enrolled new pupils in blue ink with a white pen. Some laughed at her, others remembered that she must have something to love after Miss Kitty died.

Miss Ailie had her romance, as you may hear by and by, but you would not have thought it as she came forward to meet you in the blue-and-white room, trembling lest your feet had brought in mud, but too much a lady to ask you to stand on a newspaper, as she would have liked dearly to do. She was somewhat beyond middle-age, and stoutly, even squarely, built, which gave her a masculine appearance; but she had grown so timid since Miss Kitty's death that when she spoke you felt that either her figure or her manner must have been intended for someone else. In conversation she had a way of ending a sentence in the middle which gave her a reputation of being "thro'ither," though an artificial tooth was the cause. It was slightly loose, and had she not at times shut her mouth suddenly, and then done something with her tongue, an accident might have happened. This tooth fascinated Tommy, and once when she was talking he cried, excitedly, "Quick, it's coming!" whereupon her mouth snapped close, and she turned pink in the blue-and-white room.

James Matthew Barrie, *Sentimental Tommy*.
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THE CHAPDELAIN COTTAGE

Through the little square window she threw a melancholy glance over the scanty cleared fields behind the house, the barn built of ill-joined planks that showed marks of fire, and the land beyond still covered with stumps and encompassed by the forest, whence any return of hay or grain could only be looked for at the end of long and patient waiting. . . . Maria looked about

her to see if some change, unlikely though that might be, had taken place while she was away.

The great three-decked stove stood in the centre of the house; the sheet-iron stove-pipe, after mounting for some feet, turned at a right angle and was carried through the house to the outside, so that none of the precious warmth should be lost. In a corner was a large wooden cupboard; close by, the table; a bench against the wall; on the other side of the door the sink and the pump. A partition beginning at the opposite wall seemed designed to divide the house in two, but it stopped before reaching the stove and did not begin again beyond it, in such fashion that these divisions of the room were each enclosed on three sides and looked like a stage setting—the conventional type of scene where the audience are invited to imagine that two distinct apartments exist although they look into both at once.

In one of these compartments the father and mother had their bed; Maria and Alma Rose in the other. A steep stairway ascended from a corner to the loft where the boys slept in the summer-time; with the coming of winter they moved their bed down and enjoyed the warmth of the stove with the rest of the family.

Hanging upon the wall were the illustrated calendars of shopkeepers in Roberval and Chicoutimi; a picture of the infant Jesus in his mother's arms—a rosy-faced Jesus with great blue eyes, holding out his chubby hands; a representation of some unidentified saint looking rapturously heavenward; the first page of the Christmas number of a Quebec newspaper, filled with stars big as moons and angels flying with folded wings.

Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine*. Copyright 1921 by the Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

MR. NAHUM'S ROOM

She laid two fingers on my shoulder, cast another look into my face under her candle, turned the key in the lock, gently thrust me beyond the door, shut it: and left me to my own devices.

What first I noticed, being for awhile a little alarmed at this strange proceeding, was the evening light that poured in on the room from the encircling windows. Below, by walking some little distance from room to room, corridor to corridor, you could get (as I have said) a single narrow view out north, south, east, or west. Here, you could stand in the middle, and turning slowly like a top on your heels, could watch float by one after the other, hill and windmill, ocean, distant city, dark yew-wood.

The crooning of doves was audible on the roof, swallows were coursing in the placid and rosy air, the whole world seemed to be turning softly out of the day's sunshine, stretching long dark shadows across hill and valley as if in delight to be on the verge of rest and slumber again, now that the heats of full summer were so near.

But I believe my first *thought* was— What a boiling hot and glaring place to sit in in the middle of the morning. And then I noticed that heavy curtains hung on either side each rounded window, for shade, concealment and solitude. As soon, however, as my eyes were accustomed to the dazzle, I spent little time upon the great view, but immediately peered about me at what was in this curious chamber.

Never have I seen in any room—and this was none so large—such a hugger-mugger of strange objects—odd-shaped coloured shells, fragments of quartz, thunder-

bolts and fossils; skins of brilliant birds; outlandish shoes; heads, faces, masks of stone, wood, glass, wax, and metal; pots, images, glass shapes, and what not; lanterns and bells; bits of harness and ornament and weapons. There were, besides, two or three ships of different rigs in glass cases, and one in a green bottle; peculiar tools, little machines; silent clocks, instruments of music, skulls and bones of beasts, frowsy bunches of linen or silk queerly marked, and a mummied cat (I think). And partly concealed, as I twisted my head, there, dangling in an alcove, I caught sight of a full-length skeleton, one hollow eye-hole concealed by a curtain looped to the floor from the ceiling.

I just cast my glance round on all these objects without of course seeing them one by one. The air was clear as water in the evening light, a little dust had fallen; all was in order, though at that hasty glance there seemed to be none. Last, but not least, there was row on row of painted pictures. Wherever there was space on the walls free of books, this round tower room was hung with them as close as their frames and nails allowed. There I stood, hearing faintly the birds, conscious of the pouring sunlight, the only live creature amidst this departed traveller's treasures and possessions.

I was so much taken aback by it all, so mystified by Miss Taroone's ways, so cold at sight of the harmless bones above me, and felt so suddenly out of my familiars, that without a moment's hesitation I turned about, flung open the door and went helter skelter clattering down the stairs—out of the glare into the gloom.

Walter de la Mare, *Come Hither*. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. By permission of Mr. de la Mare.

THE INTERIOR OF ST. MARK'S

Through the heavy door whose bronze network closes the place of his rest, let us enter the church itself. It is lost in still deeper twilight, to which the eye must be accustomed for some moments before the form of the building can be traced; and then there opens before us a vast cave, hewn out into the form of a Cross, and divided into shadowy aisles by many pillars. Round the domes of its roof the light enters only through the narrow apertures like large stars; and here and there a ray or two from some far-away casement wanders into the darkness, and casts a narrow phosphoric stream upon the waves of marble that heave and fall in a thousand colours along the floor. What else there is of light is from torches, or silver lamps, burning ceaselessly in the recesses of the chapels; the roof sheeted with gold, and the polished walls covered with alabaster, giving back at every curve and angle some feeble gleaming to the flames; and the glories round the heads of the sculptured saints flash out upon us as we pass them, and sink again into the gloom. Under foot and over head, a continual succession of crowded imagery, one picture passing into another as in a dream; forms beautiful and terrible mixed together; dragons and serpents, and ravening beasts of prey, and graceful birds that in the midst of them drink from running fountains and feed from vases of crystal; the passions and the pleasures of human life symbolized together, and the mystery of its redemption; for the mazes of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the Cross, lifted and carved in every place and upon every stone; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped round it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms, and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet; conspic-

uous most of all on the great rood that crosses the church before the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. And although in the recesses of the aisles and chapels, when the mist of incense hangs heavily, we may see continually a figure traced in faint lines upon their marble, a woman standing with her eyes raised to heaven, and the inscription above her, "Mother of God," she is not here the presiding deity. It is the Cross that is first seen, and always, burning in the hollow of the temple; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost height of it, raised in power, or returning in judgment.

John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*.

LOCALITIES

LLANBLETHIAN

Llanblethian hangs pleasantly, with its white cottages, and orchard and other trees, on the western slope of a green hill; looking far and wide over green meadows and little or bigger hills, in the pleasant plain of Glamorgan; a short mile to the south of Cowbridge, to which smart little town it is properly a kind of suburb. Plain of Glamorgan, some ten miles wide and thirty or forty long, which they call the Vale of Glamorgan;—though properly it is not quite a vale, there being only one range of mountains to it, if even one; . . . But called by whatever name, it is a most pleasant fruitful region; kind to the native, interesting to the visitor. A waving, grassy region; cut with innumerable ragged lanes; dotted with sleepy unswept human hamlets, old ruinous castles with their ivy and their daws, gray sleepy churches with their ditto ditto; for ivy everywhere abounds; and generally

a rank fragrant vegetation clothes all things; hanging, in rude many-colored festoons and fringed odoriferous tapestries, on your right and on your left, in every lane. A country kinder to the sluggard husbandman than any I have ever seen. . . . A decidedly cheerful group of human homes, the greater part of them indeed belonging to persons of refined habits; trimness, shady shelter, whitewash, neither conveniency nor decoration has been neglected here. Its effect from the distance on the eastward is very pretty; you see it like a little sleeping cataract of white houses, with trees overshadowing and fringing it; and there the cataract hangs, and does not rush away from you.

Thomas Carlyle, *Life of John Sterling*.

EGDON HEATH

A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an installment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come; darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upwards, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his faggot and go home. The distant rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a

division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread.

In fact, precisely at this transitional point of its nightly roll into darkness the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste began, and nobody could be said to understand the heath who had not been there at such a time. It could best be felt when it could not clearly be seen, its complete effect and explanation lying in this and the succeeding hours before the next dawn: then, and only then, did it tell its true tale. The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre stretch of woods and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. And so the obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land closed together in a black fraternization towards which each advanced half-way.

The place became full of watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus unmoved during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to wait one last crisis—the final overthrow. . . . Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity. . . .

The most thorough-going ascetic could feel that he had a natural right to wander on Egdon: he was keeping within the line of legitimate indulgence when he laid himself open to influences such as these. Colours and beauties so far subdued were, at least, the birthright of all. Only in summer days of highest feather did its mood touch the level of gaiety. Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests, and mists. Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity; for the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms; and it was found to be the hitherto unrecognized original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like these.

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly; neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have lived long apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities.

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*.

CHESTER

Chester—I like this place much; but somehow I feel glad when I get among the quiet eighteenth century buildings, in cosy places with some elbow room about them, after the older architecture. This other is be-

devilled and furtive; it seems to stoop; I am afraid of trap-doors, and could not go pleasantly into such houses. I don't know how much of this is legitimately the effect of the architecture; little enough, possibly; possibly far the most part of it comes from bad historical novels and the disquieting statuary that garnishes some façades. . . . I want to come back on what I have said about eighteenth century and middle-age houses: I do not know if I have yet explained to you the sort of loyalty, of urbanity, that there is about the one to my mind; the spirit of a country orderly and prosperous, a flavour of the presence of magistrates and well-to-do merchants in bag-wigs, the clink of glasses at night in fire-lit parlours, something certain and civic and domestic is all about these quiet, staid, shapely houses, with no character but their exceeding shapeliness, and the comely external utterance that they make of their internal comfort. Now the others are, as I have said, both furtive and bedevilled; they are sly and grotesque; they combine their sort of feverish grandeur with their sort of secretive baseness, after the manner of a Charles the Ninth. They are peopled for me with persons of the same fashion. Dwarfs and sinister people in cloaks are about them; and I seem to divine crypts, and, as I said, trap-doors. O God be praised that we live in this good daylight and this good peace.

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Copyright 1913 by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

EDINBURGH

The ancient and famous metropolis of the North sits overlooking a windy estuary from the slope and summit

of three hills. No situation could be more commanding for the head city of a kingdom; none better chosen for noble prospects. From her tall precipice and terraced gardens she looks far and wide on the sea and broad champaigns. To the east you may catch at sunset the spark of the May lighthouse, where the Firth expands into the German Ocean; and away to the west, over all the carse of Stirling, you can see the first snows upon Ben Ledi.

But Edinburgh pays cruelly for her high seat in one of the vilest climates under heaven. She is liable to be beaten upon by all the winds that blow, to be drenched with rain, to be buried in cold sea fogs out of the east, and powdered with the snow as it comes flying southward from the Highland hills. The weather is raw and boisterous in winter, shifty and ungenial in summer, and a downright meteorological purgatory in the spring. The delicate die early, and I, as a survivor, among bleak winds and plumping rain, have been sometimes tempted to envy them their fate. For all who love shelter and the blessings of the sun, who hate dark weather and perpetual tilting against squalls, there could scarcely be found a more unhomely and harassing place of residence. Many such aspire angrily after that Somewhere-else of the imagination, where all troubles are supposed to end. They lean over the great bridge which joins the New Town with the Old—that windiest spot, or high altar, in this northern temple of the winds—and watch the trains smoking out from under them and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies. Happy the passengers who shake off the dust of Edinburgh, and have heard for the last time the cry of the east wind among her chimney-tops. And yet the place establishes an interest in people's hearts; go where they will, they

find no city of the same distinction; go where they will, they take a pride in their old home.

Venice, it has been said, differs from all other cities in the sentiment which she inspires. The rest may have admirers; she only, a famous fair one, counts lovers in her train. And, indeed, even by her kindest friends, Edinburgh is not considered in a smiliar sense. These like her for many reasons, not any one of which is satisfactory in itself. They like her whimsically, if you will, and somewhat as a virtuoso dotes upon his cabinet. Her attraction is romantic, in the narrowest meaning of that term. Beautiful as she is, she is not so much beautiful as interesting. She is preëminently Gothic, and all the more so since she has set herself off with some Greek airs, and erected classic temples on her crags. In a word, and above all, she is a curiosity. . . . There is a spark among the embers; from time to time the old volcano smokes. Edinburgh has but partly abdicated, and still wears, in parody, her metropolitan trappings. Half a capital and half a country town, the whole city leads a double existence; it has long trances of the one and flashes of the other; like the king of the Black Isles, it is half alive and half of monumental marble. There are armed men and cannon in the citadel overhead; you may see the troops marshalled on the high parade; and at night after the early winter even-fall, and in the morning before the laggard winter dawn, the wind carries abroad over Edinburgh the sound of drums and bugles. Grave judges sit bewigged in what was once the scene of imperial deliberations. Close by in the High Street perhaps the trumpets may sound about the stroke of noon; and you see a troop of citizens in tawdry masquerade; tabard above, heather-mixture trouser below, and the men themselves trudging in the mud among unsym-

pathetic bystanders. The grooms of a well-appointed circus tread the streets with a better presence. And yet these are the Heralds and Pursuivants of Scotland, who are about to proclaim a new law of the United Kingdom before two-score boys, and thieves, and hackney-coachmen. Meanwhile every hour the bell of the University rings out over the hum of the streets, and every hour a double tide of students, coming and going, fills the deep archways. And lastly, one night in the spring-time—or say one morning rather, at the peep of day—late folk may hear the voices of many men singing a psalm in unison from a church on one side of the old High Street; and a little after, or perhaps a little before, the sound of many men singing a psalm in unison from another church on the opposite side of the way. There will be something in the words about the dew of Hermon, and how goodly it is to see brethren dwelling together in unity. And the late folk will tell themselves that all this singing denotes the conclusion of the two yearly ecclesiastical parliaments—the parliaments of Churches which are brothers in many admirable virtues, but not specially like brothers in this particular of a tolerant and peaceful life.

Again meditative people will find a charm in a certain consonancy between the aspect of the city and its odd and stirring history. Few places, if any, offer a more barbaric display of contrasts to the eye. In the very midst stands one of the most satisfactory crags in nature—a Bass Rock upon dry land, rooted in a garden shaken by passing trains, carrying a crown of battlements and turrets, and describing its warlike shadow over the liveliest and brightest thoroughfare of the New Town. From their smoky beehives, ten stories high, the unwashed look down upon the open squares and gardens of the

wealthy; and gay people sunning themselves along Princes Street, with its mile of commercial palaces all beflagged upon some great occasion, see, across a gardened valley set with statues, where the washings of the Old Town flutter in the breeze at its high windows. And then, upon all sides, what a clashing of architecture! In this one valley, where the life of the town goes most busily forward, there may be seen, shown one above and behind another by the accidents of the ground, buildings in almost every style upon the globe. Egyptian and Greek temples, Venetian palaces and Gothic spires, are huddled one over another in a most admired disorder; while, above all, the brute mass of the Castle and the summit of Arthur's Seat look down upon these imitations with a becoming dignity, as the works of Nature may look down upon the monuments of Art. But Nature is a more indiscriminate patroness than we imagine, and in no way frightened of a strong effect. The birds roost as willingly among the Corinthian capitals as in the crannies of the crag; the same atmosphere and daylight clothe the eternal rocks and yesterday's imitation portico; and as the soft northern sunshine throws out everything into a glorified distinctness—or easterly mists, coming up with the blue evening, fuse all these incongruous features into one, and the lamps begin to glitter along the street, and faint lights to burn in the high windows across the valley—the feeling grows upon you that this also is a piece of nature in the most intimate sense; that this profusion of eccentricities, this dream in masonry and living rock, is not a drop-scene in a theatre, but a city in the world of everyday reality, connected by railway and telegraph-wire with all the capitals of Europe, and inhabited by citizens of the familiar type, who keep ledgers, and attend church, and have sold their immortal portion to a daily paper. By

all the canons of romance, the place demands to be half deserted and leaning towards decay; birds we might admit in profusion, the play of the sun and winds, and a few gipsies encamped in their chief thoroughfare; but these citizens, with their cabs and tramways, their trains and posters, are altogether out of key. Chartered tourists, they make free with historic localities, and rear their young among the most picturesque sites with a grand human indifference. To see them thronging by, in their neat clothes and conscious moral rectitude, and with a little air of possession that verges on the absurd, is not the least striking feature of the place.

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Edinburgh*. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, the authorized publishers.

HAVERFORD

Haverford is changed as little as any of the suburbs since the days when one knew it by heart. Yet Mr. Harbaugh has moved his pharmacy to a new building, and it can never be quite the same! The old stuffed owl sits bravely in the new window, but the familiar drug-scented haunt where we drank our first soda and bought our first tobacco is empty and forlorn. But the deep buttercup meadow by the Lancaster pike is still broad and green, with the same fawn-colored velvety cow grazing.

And there is one thing that can never change: the smell of the Haverford lawns in May, when the grass is being mowed. A dazzling pervasion of sunlight loiters over those gentle slopes, draws up the breadth of the grass, blue space is rich with its balmy savor. Under the arches of the old maples are the white figures of the cricketers. In the memorial garden behind the library the blue phlox

is out in pale masses. The archway of the beech hedge looks down on the huge prostrate mock-orange tree. Under the hemlocks (I hope they're hemlocks) by the observatory is that curious soft, dry, bleached grass which is so perfect to lie on with a book and not read it. And here comes Harry Carter careering over the lawns with his gasoline mowing machine. Everything is the same at heart. And that is why it's the perfect pilgrimage, the loveliest spot on earth, then, now, and forever!

Christopher Morley, *Travels in Philadelphia*.
By permission of the author and David McKay
Company.

THE ISLE OF DOGS

I am not of those who share the prevailing opinions of The Isle of Dogs: I do not see it as a haunt of greyness and distress. To the informed mind it is full and passionate. Every one of its streets is a sharp-flavored adventure. Where others find insipidity, I find salt and fire. Its shapes and sounds and silences and colours have allured me from first acquaintance. . . .

It is, I admit, the ugly step-child of parishes; but, then, I love all ugly step-children. It is *gauche* and ridiculous. It sprawls. It is permanently overhung with mist. It has all the virtues of the London County Council, and it is very nearly uninhabitable. Very nearly uninhabitable . . . but not quite. . . .

Stand by the crazy bridge at the gates of West India Dock, at six o'clock, when, through the lilac dusks, comes that flock of chattering magpies—the little work-girls—and see if I am not right. . . .

And the colour . . . There is nothing in the world like it for depth and glamour. I know no evenings so tender as those that gather about the Island: at once heartsome

and subdued. The colour of street and sky and water, sprinkled with a million timid stars, is an ecstasy. You cannot name it. You see it first as blue, then as purple, then lilac, rose, silver. The clouds that flank the high-shouldered buildings and chimneys share in these subtle changes, and shift and shift from definite hues to some haunting scheme that was never seen in any colourman's catalogue.

On the night when I took Georgie round the Island, a hard, clear frost was abroad. The skies glittered with steady stars. The streets seemed strangely wide and frank, clear-cut and definite. A fat-faced moon lighted them. The waters were swift and limpid, flecked with bold light. The gay public-house at the Dock gates shone sharp, like a cut gem. . . . As we stood on the shuddering bridge the clear night spread such a stillness over the place that you could almost hear a goods train shunt; and we stood there watching the berthing of a big P. and O. for many pensive minutes.

Thomas Burke, *Nights in London*. By permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company.

A CHINESE NIGHT

To turn from East India Dock Road to West India Dock Road is to turn, contradictorily, from West to East, from a fury of lights and noise and faces into a stillness almost chaste. At least, chaste is the first word you think of. In a few seconds you feel that it is the wrong epithet. Something . . . something there is in this dusky, throttled highway that seems to be crawling into your blood. The road seems to shrink before you; and you know that, once in, you can only get out by retracing your steps or crossing into the lost Isle of Dogs. Against

the wrath of October cloud, little low shops peer at you. In the sharp shadows their lights fall like swords across your path. The shuttered gloom of the eastern side shows strangely menacing. Each whispering house seems an abode of dread things. Each window seems filled with frightful eyes. Each corner, half-lit by a timid gas-jet, seems to harbour unholy creatures. A black man, with Oriental features, brushes against you. You collide with a creeping yellow man. He says something—it might be Chinese or Japanese or Philippinese jargon. A huge Hindoo shuffles, cat-like, against the shops. A fried-fish bar, its windows covered with Scandinavian phrases, flings a burst of melodious light for which you are grateful.

No; chaste was certainly not the right word. Say, rather, furtive, sinister. You are in Limehouse. The peacefulness seems to be that attendant upon underhand designs, and the twilight is that of people who love it because their deeds are evil.

Thomas Burke, *Nights in London*. By permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company.

NEW YORK HARBOR

It was at the end of day and a light fog rested on the water. Nothing was entirely lost, yet a gray mystery wrapped the ships and buildings. If New Jersey still existed it was dim and shadowy as though its real life had gone and but a ghost remained. Ferry boats were lighted in defiance of the murk, and darted here and there at reckless angles. An ocean liner was putting out, and several tugs had rammed their noses against her sides. There is something engaging about a tug. It snorts with eagerness. It kicks and splashes. It bursts itself to

lend a hand. And how it butts with its nose! Surely its forward cartilages are of triple strength, else in its zest it would jam its nasal passages.

Presently we came opposite lower New York. Although the fog concealed the outlines of the buildings, their lights showed through. This first hour of dark is best, before the day's work is done and while as yet all of the windows are lighted. The Woolworth Tower was suffused in a soft shadowy light. The other buildings showed like mountains of magic pin-pricks. It was as though all the constellations of heaven on a general bidding had met for a conference.

The man of Grub Street, having by this time somewhat dispelled the fumes of dullness from his head, descends from his ferry boat and walks to his quiet park. There is a dull roar from the elevated railway on Third Avenue, where the last of the day's crowd goes home. The sidewalks are becoming empty. There is a sheen of water on the pavement. In the winter murk there is a look of Thackeray about the place as though the Sedleys or the Osbornes might be his neighbors. If there were a crest above his bell-pull he might even expect Becky Sharp in for tea.

Charles S. Brooks. *There's Pippins and Cheese To Come*. Used by permission of Yale University Press.

THE STREET

. . . A foretaste of the languor of June is in the air. The turnstile storm-doors in our office-building, which have been put aside for brief periods during the first deceptive approaches of spring, only to come back triumphant from Elba, have been definitely removed. The steel-workers pace their girders twenty floors high

almost in mid-season form, and their pneumatic hammers scold and chatter through the sultry hours. The soda fountains are bright with new compounds whose names ingeniously reflect the world's progress from day to day in politics, science, and the arts. From my window I can see the long black steamships pushing down to the sea, and they raise vague speculations in my mind about the cost of living in the vicinity of Sorrento and Fontainebleau. On such a day I am reminded of my physician's orders, issued last December, to walk a mile every afternoon on leaving my office. So I stroll up Broadway with the intention of taking my train farther up-town, at Fourteenth Street.

. . . In the city, where I should swing along briskly, I lounge. What is there on Broadway to linger over? On Broadway Nature has used her biggest, fattest type-forms. Tall, flat, building fronts, brazen with many windows and ribbed with commercial gilt lettering six feet high; shrieking proclamations of auction sales written in letters of fire on vast canvases; railway posters in scarlet and blue and green; rotatory barber-poles striving at the national colors and producing vertigo; banners, escutcheons, crests in all the primary colors—surely none of these things needs poring over. And I know them with my eyes closed. I know the windows where lithe youths in gymnasium dress demonstrate the virtue of home exercises; the windows where other young men do nothing but put on and take off patent reversible near-linen collars; where young women deftly roll cigarettes; where other young women whittle at sticks with miraculously stopped razors. I know these things by heart, yet I linger over them in flagrantly unhygienic attitudes, my shoulders bent forward, and my chest and diaphragm precisely the reverse of that prescribed by the doctor.

Perhaps the thing that makes me linger before these familiar sights is the odd circumstance that in Broadway's shop-windows Nature is almost never herself, but is either supernatural or artificial. Nature, for instance, never intended that razors should cut wood and remain sharp; that linen collars should keep on getting cleaner the longer they are worn; that glass should not break; that ink should not stain; that gauze should not tear; that an object worth five dollars should sell for \$1.39; but all these things happen in Broadway windows. Williams, whom I meet now and then, who sometimes turns and walks up with me to Fourteenth Street, pointed out to me the other day how strange a thing it was that the one street which has become a synonym for "real life" to all good suburban Americans, is not real at all, but is crowded either with miracles or with imitations.

The windows on Broadway glow with wax fruits and with flowers of muslin and taffeta drawn by bounteous Nature from her storehouses in Parisian garret workshops. Broadway's ostrich feathers have been plucked in East side tenements. The huge cigars in the tobacconist's windows are of wood. The enormous bottles of champagne in the saloons are of cardboard, and empty. The tall scaffoldings of proprietary medicine bottles in the drug shops are of paper. "Why," said Williams, "even the jewelry sold in the Japanese auction stores is not genuine, and the sellers are not Japanese."

This bustling mart of commerce, as the generation after the Civil War used to say, is only a world of illusion. Artificial flowers, artificial fruits, artificial limbs, tobacco, rubber, silks, woolens, straws, gold, silver. . . . The ladies who smile out of charming morning costumes are obviously of lining and plaster. Their smug Herculean husbands in pajamas preserve their equanimity in the

severest weather only because of their wire-and-plaster constitutions. The baby reposing in its beribboned crib is china and excelsior. Illusion everywhere.

But the Broadway crowd is real. You only have to buffet it for five minutes to feel, in eyes and arms and shoulders, how real it is. When I was a boy and was taken to the circus, it was always an amazing thing to me that there should be so many people in the street moving in a direction away from the circus. . . . But on Broadway on a late summer afternoon . . . the natural thing is that the living tide as it presses south shall beat me back, halt me, eddy around me. I know that there are people moving north with me, but I am not acutely aware of them. This onrush of faces converges on me alone. It is I against half the world.

The crowd on lower Broadway is alert and well set up. . . . The men on the sidewalk are young, limber, sharp-faced, almost insolent young men. There are not very many old men in the crowd, though I see any number of gray-haired young men. Seldom do you detect the traditional signs of age, the sagging lines of the face, the relaxed abdominal contour, the tamed spirit. The young, the young-old, the old-young, but rarely quite the old.

I am speaking only of externals. Clean-cut eager faces are very frequently disappointing. A very ordinary mind may be working behind that clear sweep of brow and nose and chin. I have known the shock of young men who look like kings of Wall Street and speak like shoe clerks. They are shoe clerks. But the appearance is there, that athletic carriage which is helped out by our triumphant, ready-made clothing. I suppose I ought to detest the tailor's tricks which iron out all ages and all stations into a uniformity of padded shoulders and trim

waistlines and hips. I imagine I ought to despise our habit of wearing elegant shoddy where the European chooses honest, clumsy woolens. But I am concerned only with externals, and in outward appearances a Broadway crowd beats the world. . . .

I still have to speak of the women in the crowd. What an infinitely finer thing is a woman than a man of her class! To see this for yourself you have only to walk up Broadway until the southward-bearing stream breaks off and the tide begins to run from west to east. You have passed out of the commercial district into the region of factories. It is well on toward dark, and the barracks that go by the unlovely name of loft buildings are pouring out their battalions of needle-workers. The crowd has become a mass. The nervous pace of lower Broadway slackens to the steady, patient tramp of a host. It is an army of women, with here and there a flying detachment of the male. . . .

. . . I am now on a different Broadway. The crowd is no longer north and south, but flows in every direction. It is churned up at every corner and spreads itself across the squares and open places. Its appearance has changed. It is no longer a factory population. Women still predominate, but they are the women of the professions and trades which center about Madison Square—business women of independent standing, women from the magazine offices, the publishing houses, the insurance offices. You detect the bachelor girl in the current which sets in toward the home quarters of the undomesticated, the little Bohemias, the foreign eating-places, whose fixed *table d'hôte* prices flash out in illumined signs from the side streets. Still farther north and the crowd becomes tinged with the current of that Broadway which the outside world knows best. The idlers begin to mingle with the

workers, men appear in English clothes with canes, women desperately corseted with plumes and jeweled reticules. You catch the first heart-beat of Little Old New York.

The first stirrings of this gayer Broadway die down as quickly almost as they manifest themselves. The idlers and those who minister to them have heard the call of the dinner hour and have vanished, into hotel doors, into shabbier quarters by no means in keeping with the cut of their garments and their apparent indifference to useful employment. Soon the street is almost empty. It is not a beautiful Broadway in this garish interval between the last of the matinee and shopping crowd and the vanguard of the night crowd. The monster electric sign-boards have not begun to gleam and flash and revolve and confound the eye and the senses. At night the electric Niagara hides the squalid fronts of ugly brick, the dark doorways, the clutter of fire-escapes, the rickety wooden hoardings. Not an imperial street this Broadway at 6:30 of a summer's afternoon. Cheap jewelry shops, cheap tobacconists' shops, cheap haberdasheries, cheap restaurants, grimy little newspaper agencies and ticket-offices, and "demonstration" stores for patent foods, patent waters, patent razors. . . .

O Gay White Way, you are far from gay in the fast-fading light, before the magic hand of Edison wipes the wrinkles from your face and galvanizes you into hectic vitality; far from alluring with your tinsel shop-windows, with your puffy-faced, unshaven men leaning against doorposts and chewing pessimistic toothpicks, your sharp-eyed newsboys wise with the wisdom of the Tenderloin, and your itinerant women whose eyes flash from side to side. It is not in this guise that you draw the hearts of millions to yourself, O dingy Gay White Way, O Via Lobsteria Dolorosa!

Well, when a man begins to moralize, it is time to go home. I have walked farther than I intended, and I am soft from lack of exercise, and tired. The romance of the crowd has disappeared. Romance cannot survive that short passage of Longacre Square, where the art of the theatre and of the picture postcard flourish in an atmosphere impregnated with gasoline. As I glance into the windows of the automobile salesrooms and catch my own reflection in the enamel of Babylonian limousines, I find myself thinking all at once of the children at home. They expand and fill up the horizon. Broadway disappears. I smile into the face of a painted promenader, but how is she to know that it is not at her I smile, but at the sudden recollection of what the baby said at the breakfast-table that morning? Like all good New Yorkers when they enter the Subway, I proceed to choke up all my senses against contact with the external world, and thus resolving myself into a state of coma, I dip down into the bowels of the earth, whence in due time I am spewed out two short blocks from Belshazzar Court.

Simeon Strunsky, *Belshazzar Court*. Henry Holt & Company, 1914. By permission of the publishers.

SAFFRON PARK

The suburb of Saffron Park lay on the sunset side of London, as red and ragged as a cloud of sunset. It was built of a bright brick throughout; its skyline was fantastic, and even its ground plan was wild. It had been the outburst of a speculative builder, faintly tinged with art, who called its architecture sometimes Elizabethan and sometimes Queen Anne, apparently under the impression that the two sovereigns were identical. It was

described with some justice as an artistic colony, though it never in any definable way produced any art. But although its pretensions to be an intellectual centre were a little vague, its pretensions to be a pleasant place were quite indisputable. The stranger who looked for the first time at the quaint red houses could only think how very oddly shaped the people must be who could fit into them. Nor when he met the people was he disappointed in this respect. The place was not only pleasant, but perfect, if once he could regard it not as a deception, but rather as a dream. Even if the people were not "artists," the whole was nevertheless artistic. . . . A man who stepped into its social atmosphere felt as if he had stepped into a written comedy.

More especially this attractive unreality fell upon it about nightfall, when the extravagant roofs were dark against the afterglow, and the whole insane village seemed as separate as a drifting cloud. This again was more strongly true of the many nights of local festivity, when the little gardens were often illuminated, and the big Chinese lanterns glowed in the dwarfish trees like some fierce and monstrous fruit. And this was strongest of all on one particular evening, still vaguely, remembered in the locality, of which the auburn-haired poet was the hero. . . .

This particular evening, if it is remembered for nothing else, will be remembered in that place for its strange sunset. It looked like the end of the world. All the heaven seemed covered with a quite vivid and palpable plumage; you could only say that the sky was full of feathers, and of feathers that almost brushed the face. Across the great part of the dome they were grey, with the strangest tints of violet and mauve and an unnatural pink or pale green; but towards the west the whole grew

past description, transparent and passionate, and the last red-hot plumes of it covered up the sun like something too good to be seen. The whole was so close about the earth, as to express nothing but a violent secrecy. The very empyrean seemed to be a secret. It expressed that splendid smallness which is the soul of local patriotism. The very sky seemed small.

Gilbert Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Copyright by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. Used by permission.

DREAMTHORP

It matters not to relate how or when I became a denizen of Dreamthorp; it will be sufficient to say that I am not a born native, but that I came to reside in it a good while ago now. The several towns and villages in which, in my time, I have pitched a tent, did not please, for one obscure reason or another: this one was too large, t'other too small; but when, on a summer evening about the hour of eight, I first beheld Dreamthorp, with its westward-looking windows painted by sunset, its children playing in the single straggling street, the mothers knitting at the open doors, the fathers standing about in long white blouses, chatting or smoking; the great tower of the ruined castle rising high into the rosy air, with a whole troop of swallows—by distance made as small as gnats—skimming about its rents and fissures;—when I first beheld all this, I felt instinctively that my knapsack might be taken off my shoulders, that my tired feet might wander no more, that at last, on the planet, I had found a home. . . .

The village stands far inland; and the streams that trot through the soft green valleys all about have as little

knowledge of the sea, as the three-years' child of the storms and passions of manhood. The surrounding country is smooth and green, full of undulations; and pleasant country roads strike through it in every direction, bound for distant towns and villages, yet in no hurry to reach them. On these roads the lark in summer is continually heard, nests are plentiful in the hedges and dry ditches; and on the grassy banks, and at the feet of the bowed dikes, the blue-eyed speedwell smiles its benison on the passing wayfarer. On these roads you may walk for a year, and encounter nothing more remarkable than the country cart, troops of tawny children from the woods, laden with primroses, and at long intervals—for people in this district live to a ripe age—a black funeral creeping in from some remote hamlet; and to this last the people reverently doff their hats and stand aside. Death does not walk about here often, but when he does he receives as much respect as the squire himself. Everything round one is unhurried, quiet, moss-grown, and orderly. Season follows in the track of season, and one year can hardly be distinguished from another. Time should be measured here by the silent dial, rather than by the ticking clock, or by the chimes of the church. . . .

The castle, uninhabited now but by jackdaws and starlings, is old; the chapel which adorns it is older still; and the lake behind both, and in which their shadows sleep, is, I suppose, as old as Adam. A fountain in the marketplace, all mouths and faces and curious arabesques—as dry, however, as the castle moat,—has a tradition connected with it. . . . The houses are old, and remote dates may yet be deciphered on the stones above the door; the apple-trees are mossed and ancient; countless generations of sparrows have bred in the thatched roofs, and

thereon have chirped out their lives. In every room of the place men have been born, men have died. On Dreamthorp centuries have fallen, and have left no more trace than last winter's snowflakes.

Alexander Smith, *Dreamthorp*.

CHAPTER VI

Character Description

In order to describe human beings, through the medium either of colors or of words, the artist must possess in marked degree power both of observation and of understanding. He must be able to photograph reality with all the fidelity of a camera, seeing clearly and without sentiment the merits and defects of his subject, those features which are common to all men, and those which are peculiar to the individual. But the artist in words must give us something that the camera never can—that even the painter achieves but seldom. Neither the untouched negative nor the retouched portrait is ever a perfect likeness; at best it suggests only partial truth. The clothes in which we dress for our photographs, the expressions on our faces, are assumed for the occasion; they represent one aspect, never the whole man or woman. The artist in color or in words, on the other hand, may catch and fix forever in his portrait the *nature* of his subject. The portraits in the galleries of Europe to which we go back again and again are those in which we recognize interpretation. Here we see artistic faithfulness to detail; we know that not one physical peculiarity escaped the painter, but we feel also that the artist saw beneath those peculiarities to the real man—saint or sinner—hidden from the world. Much depends on technique, but technique alone is not enough. That was what Brown-
ing's Andrea del Sarto realized, when for a moment he

last
eye
guato

was tempted to correct—as he could have corrected—Raphael's drawing of an arm, and then threw down the chalk, realizing: "Ay, but the soul! he's Raphael! rub it out!"

only allied to photography

The first sort of character description upon which the beginner should work is what we may call objective description. It is essential that the writer be able first of all to draw a portrait accurate in physical details; the character, whether real or imaginary, must be so clear in his mind that he can at any moment reconstruct it in its entirety. Most of us have at one time or another come across novels in which a character was evidently so vague in the mind of its author that we find her at one time with blue eyes, at another with brown! The artist then, must be certain of the features of his character, of his dress and general appearance; but a mere catalogue of features is not enough, as Olivia knew, when she responded amusedly to the Duke's lavish praise of her beauty:

Contrast with Macbeth's description of the lady

I will give out divers schedules of my beauty. It shall be inventoried and every particle and utensil labell'd to my will: as, item, two lips indifferent red; item, two gray eyes, with lids to them; item, one neck, one chin, and so forth.

Macbeth's description of the lady

As artificial as the "catalogue" method in character description, are the ever-present platitudes of "conventional" description. Until very recent times, the hero and heroine of the average novel were not individuals but *types*. After the first line of description the reader could—and usually did—skip the rest, since he knew it by analogy to all the other novels he had read. The heroine was either an exquisite blonde or a magnificent brunette; her eyes were like stars, her teeth like pearls, her cheeks like roses, and her "luxuriant tresses" either

fair as the dawn or as dark as the wing of sable night. Scott's heroines usually suffer from the fact that they belong to these conventional types. We expect Rebecca to be "exquisitely symmetrical" and are quite prepared for her "well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearls, and the profusion of her sable tresses"; just as we know that Rowena must be, to afford the perfect contrast, "a fair beauty" with a "clear blue eye, which sate enshrined beneath a graceful eyebrow of brown." The extreme of conventional description—artificial in its point of view as in its diction—Max Beerbohm shows us in his brilliant satire *Zuleika Dobson*—a book which should be read by all students of description as a compilation of magnificent examples of what not to do!

Zuleika was not strictly beautiful. Her eyes were a trifle large, and their lashes longer than they need have been. An anarchy of small curls was her chevelure, a dark upland of misrule, every hair asserting its rights over a not discreditable brow. For the rest, her features were not at all original. They seemed to have been derived rather from a gallimaufry of familiar models. From Madame de Marquise de Saint-Ouen came the shapely tilt of the nose. The mouth was a mere replica of Cupid's bow; lacquered scarlet and strung with the littlest pearls. No apple-tree, no wall of peaches had been robbed, nor any Tyrian rose-garden, for the glory of Miss Dobson's cheeks. Her hands and feet were of very mean proportion. She had no waist to speak of.

Max Beerbohm's account of his heroine will remind the reader of Shakespeare-sonnets that in Sonnet 130 Shakespeare has written his own satire upon the conventionalized character description of his day—of which he was as guilty as were his contemporaries. read

In general, it is best to choose for character descriptions a moment when the character is as natural as possible, and an environment which suits him. Modern photography has learned that lesson, and now the subject is or foreign to him

photographed no longer with his head in a vise and a look of pained anxiety upon his face. The photographer of children tries to find the children at play and takes pictures, so far as possible, when the youngsters are unconscious of observation. There are, to be sure, characters who naturally so surround themselves with state that we cannot think of them as not wearing the ermine. Thackeray's Viscountess should sit, as she does, in the great chair by the fire-corner; Pope's Belinda belongs either before her dressing-table or in the barge upon the river; Saul would not be Saul if he sat where David sat or shared David's youthful eagerness. But most characters are seen at their best in the ordinary surroundings of every-day life. George Eliot rightly pictures the blind scholar in *Romola* in his library, "with head uplifted and turned a little aside towards his daughter"; and she has a triple motive in allowing Captain Donnithorne to see Hetty in her dairy; not only was it a place in which Hetty was naturally at her ease, but the purity, freshness, and simplicity of her surroundings symbolized her own nature; then, too,—and Hetty knew this well—"there are the prettiest attitudes and movements into which a pretty girl is thrown in making up butter." Austin Dobson's fine portrait of Swift in his *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* is a purely imaginary one, but he has chosen a scene and moment entirely characteristic of Swift, whom we see at night, leaning towards the tall wax candle, writing his Journal to Stella.

The more one studies human beings, the more certain physical features come to seem significant. There are people who always notice the hands of others, because hands seem to them significant features; others, who may not be able to tell the color of the hair of an acquaintance, will always notice the teeth; all of us, to some

drawing
 "Saul"

Read

extent, interpret character by the eyes and mouth. There is, however, danger in trying to "read character" from individual features, and in generalizing about individuals on the basis of types. If one feature is overemphasized, the method becomes *caricature*, one of the most vivid forms of character drawing, yet full of pitfalls for the unwary. Lytton Strachey uses the characteristic feature of a family cleverly in his essay on Lady Hester Stanhope:¹

With Lady Hester Stanhope came the final stage. The nose, still with an upward tilt to it, had lost its masculinity; the hard bones of the uncle and grandfather had disappeared. Lady Hester's was a nose of wild ambitions, of pride grown fantastical, a nose that scorned the earth, shooting off, one fancies, towards some eternal eccentric heaven. It was a nose, in fact, altogether in the air.

The Pitt nose continues to dominate the character and the life of Lady Hester, though it is not again emphasized until that final moment when she lies dead, after a life far more extraordinary than any moving picture play. At that moment, says Lytton Strachey: "Lady Hester cared no longer; she was lying back in her bed—inexplicable, grand, preposterous, with her nose in the air."

Dickens, of course, uses caricature almost entirely. Every feature of Mr. Pecksniff, every article of his clothing, emphasizes his extreme morality; Twemlow's cheeks are "drawn in as if he had made a great effort to retire into himself some years ago and had got so far, and had never got any farther"; the "young gentleman" at the Veneering dinner party has "too much nose in his face, too much ginger in his whiskers, too much torso in his waistcoat, too much sparkle in his studs, his eyes, his

¹ From *Books and Characters*. By permission of the publishers, Harcourt, Brace and Company.

buttons, his talk, and his teeth." Whimsical, kindly caricature is Lamb's in *The South-Sea House* in his picture of Evans, "melancholy as a gib-cat over his counter in the forenoon," but "how he would chirp and expand over a muffin!" and of Thomas Tame whose whole attitude towards life was exemplified in his stoop. Our contemporary A. S. M. Hutchinson uses the same method in *If Winter Comes* when he says of a character: "He was chiefly abdominal." Galsworthy frequently makes use of the same device, though in his hands its force is usually rather dominant impression than caricature.²

He was quite a little man, with broad, high shoulders and hardly any neck; and what was noticeable in his square, wooden-looking figure, dressed in light, shabby tweed and patched yellow boots, was that he seemed to have no chest. He was flat—from his white face, with his sandy hair, moustache and eyebrows, under an old, narrow-brimmed straw hat, right down to his feet. It was as though life had planed him. His face, too, seemed to have lost all but its bones and skin of yellow-white; there were no eyelashes to his reddish-brown round eyes; there was no colour in his thin lips, compressed as though to keep the secret of a mortal fear. Save for the wheeze and rustle of his breathing, he stood very still, nervously rubbing his claw-like hands up and down his trousers-legs. His voice was hoarse and faint.

The descriptions of real people which we find frequently in biography, travel, and letters, imply usually a combination of objective and subjective elements. We ask the friend who has met a well-known man, "What does he really *look* like?" and "What *is* he like?" His reply indicates both portraiture and interpretation. One of the most familiar descriptions of one writer by another, William Ernest Henley's lines on Stevenson, combines these two methods:

² *A Commentary*, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably,
Neat-footed, and weak-fingered; in his face—
Lean, large-boned, curved of beak, and touched with race,
Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea,
The brown eyes radiant with vivacity—
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion, impudence, and energy.
Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most generous, sternly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist;
A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter-Catechist.

Henley has chosen those physical characteristics of Stevenson that most emphasize, and are most emphasized by, the mental and spiritual characteristics that he found in him. Jefferson Hogg struck the keynote for his description of his friend Shelley in his sentence: "He was the sum of many contradictions." Carlyle is a master of this sort of description. His letters are filled with lightning flashes which suddenly illuminate a character so that we see it in unforgettable clarity. Thackeray, to him, was a "big, fierce, weeping, hungry man; not a strong one"; Carlyle saw in John Sterling "a certain splendor as of burnished metal—a flash of clear-glancing, sharp-cutting steel." Who cannot see "the good Alcott, with his long, lean face and figure, with his gray, worn temples and mild radiant eyes . . . a kind of venerable Don Quixote, whom nobody can laugh at without loving"; or Richard Monckton Milnes, "a most bland-smiling, semi-quizzical, affectionate, high-bred, Italianized little man, who has long, olive-blond hair, a dimple, next to no chin, and flings his arm round your neck when he addresses you in public society"? Finest of all Carlyle's descriptive touches of this sort are his phrases about

Webster: "that crag-like amorphous face"; "the mastiff-mouth, accurately closed."

Description of statues or portraits implies interpretation, twice-removed, for one must enter first into the artist's conception of the subject and then into the subject itself. Thus before one can criticize Hawthorne's interpretation of the Marble Faun, he must have studied the statue itself and have formed his own conception of what the sculptor intended to imply. Stevenson in his letters to Mrs. Sitwell pondered over the problem of what the artist of the Elgin Marbles, called "The Three Fates," had intended to suggest in those magnificent figures; he wondered why the sculptor should have made them women not men, and finally worked out his own meaning, which may or may not have been in the mind of the creator of the figures. So Barrie through the lips of the little slavey in *A Kiss for Cinderella* whimsically solves the question of the ages when he perceives that the knee of the Venus of Milo was lifted in an attempt to catch the baby who had dropped from her arms. To Walter Pater the mystery of Mona Lisa lay in what "in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire." Though the attempt to describe a painting or a statue is valuable practice, it has seldom been more truly successful than the attempt to catch in words the cadence of music. The provinces of the arts are separate, and only occasionally does a Stevenson, a Pater, or a Carlyle succeed in interpreting one through the other.

Interpretative description of characters deals largely in connotation. We see the character, to be sure—and clearly—but we are constantly conscious of many things which the eyes of the body cannot see. A character may come to be a symbol, as Galsworthy's Prisoner is a symbol of all that is caged and caught; and he may express

himself in a symbol, as in his gray prison that man painted the picture into which he put "all that his soul longed for—woman, flowers, birds, trees, blue sky, running water and all the wonder of his spirit that he was cut off from them." Or a character may draw its power from its association in our minds with other characters. Hardy's Eustacia Vye, "the raw material of a divinity," had "Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries"; she called to mind, in one aspect, Diana, in another the Sphinx. Most of all, "her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters, and the march in 'Athalie'; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice the viola." The capacity of great descriptive artists which most amazes us is their ability to see into the true nature of the character, and show us clearly what we have felt at best gropingly and vaguely.

It must be remembered that it is not only the *appearance* of a character which is significant. His gestures, his speech, the tones of his voice, his dress, his manner—all these are, and should be, meaningful. The true artist is a psychologist; and like the psychologist he realizes that conscious acts are often less significant than unconscious reactions. He studies his subject both when on guard and when off guard, and he balances what he does against what he says. The best way to study the delineation of character is through drama, for the dramatist is strictly conditioned by his art. He cannot in his own person (though Bernard Shaw sometimes does!) step upon the stage and interpret his characters. He must do it in part by his instructions in regard to physical appearance and dress; in part by means of speech and actions; in part also by showing the effect of his character upon others.

Much can be said in a sentence or two. When the bombardment of the city is going on around the old lady in Amy Lowell's sketch, "Her hands are restless, but the white masses of her hair are quite still." When old James Forsyte—the last of the old order—meets for the first time the French wife of Soames Forsyte, Galsworthy thus describes the picture:

Stooping and immaculate in his frock-coat, thin as a line in Euclid, he received Annette's hand in his; and the anxious eyes of his furrowed face, which had lost its colour now, doubted above her.

So, too, in *Fraternity* Galsworthy describes another character:

A girl in gray was standing there—thin, delicate, rather plain, with a nose ever so little to one side, lips faintly smiling, and large, shining, greenish eyes.

When we come to the problem of describing groups of characters, the family photograph album may preach a silent warning far more effective than words. Those "family groups" of an early period, the members sitting or standing at strained attention, ranged in solemn order according to size or age, constitute a horrible example. When a number of people are described in the same scene, the author should be sure that there is some natural reason for their having been brought together; out of that reason the grouping will arise. Thus in his description of the Veneering dinner party Dickens shows a company assembled about the dinner table; the great mirror above the sideboard reflects the company so that the reader feels that he may stand behind them and watch, unseen. So, too, George Eliot in *Daniel Deronda* uses a table—though this time a gaming table—for the center of her group of diverse personalities. Lamb in

the *South-Sea House*, on the other hand, takes a group who are together, not because they have any characteristics in common, but because they spend their working hours together. William McFee in his *Deckers on the Coast* has taken a still stranger assembly—a group of human beings of all ages, races, creeds, conditions, thrown together by the chance of shipboard. Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* contains many scenes in which the members of the Forsyte family are called together on "Forsyte 'Change" by bereavement, by marriage, or by some new and incredible happening among the members of the younger generation; each of these scenes will repay study by the student, for Galsworthy is a master of this sort of writing. Like a clever stage manager he is conscious every moment of the individuals in his picture; his stage is always balanced, and he moves his characters this way and that so that there is no monotony, no tedium; yet so subtly is it all managed that his workmanship is not obvious at first reading. The interest of the reader passes now to this group, now to that; he is aware of them; yet in each scene one individual dominates and the rest are subordinated to him. In spite of the many personalities and the differences between them, there is always something common to them all, giving them artistic unity. All this Galsworthy implies in the first of these group descriptions which opens the *Man of Property*:

In turn, each of these four brothers was very different from the others, yet they too, were alike. Through the varying features and expressions of those five faces could be marked a certain steadfastness of chin, underlying surface distinctions, marking a racial stamp, too prehistoric to trace, too remote and permanent to discuss—the very hall-mark and guarantee of the family fortunes. Among the younger generation . . . there was this same stamp, less meaningful, perhaps, but unmistakable,—a sign of something ineradicable in the family soul.

CHARACTERS

BEATRIX DESCENDING THE STAIRS

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House: in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers; and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet riband which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height; and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty, that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible; and that night the great Duke was at the play-house after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty: that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes were dark; her hair curling with rich undulations and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground, was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a

nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic—there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

William Makepeace Thackeray, *Henry Esmond*.

MY LADY VISCOUNTESS

My Lady Viscountess's face was daubed with white and red up to the eyes, to which the paint gave an unearthly glare; she had a tower of lace on her head, under which was a bush of black curls—borrowed curls—so that no wonder little Henry Esmond was scared when he was first presented to her—the kind priest acting as master of the ceremonies at that solemn introduction—and he stared at her with eyes almost as great as her own, as he had stared at the player woman who acted the wicked tragedy-queen, when the players came down to Ealing Fair. She sat in a great chair by the fire-corner; in her lap was a spaniel-dog that barked furiously; on a little table by her was her ladyship's snuff-box and her sugar-plum box. She wore a dress of black velvet, and a petticoat of flame-colored brocade. She had as many rings on her fingers as the old woman of Banbury Cross; and pretty small feet which she was fond of showing, with great gold clocks to her stockings, and white pantofles with red heels; and an odor of musk was shook out of her garments whenever she moved or quitted the room, leaning on her tortoise-shell stick, little Fury barking at her heels.

William Makepeace Thackeray, *Henry Esmond*.

THE JOURNAL TO STELLA

A dim light was burning in the back room of a first-floor in Bury Street, St. James's. The apartment it irradiated was not an extensive one; and the furniture, sufficient rather than sumptuous, had that indefinable lack of physiognomy which only lodging-house furniture seems to possess. There was no fireplace; but in the adjoining parlour, partly visible through the open door, the last embers were dying in a grate from which the larger pieces of coal had been carefully lifted out and ranged in order on the hobs. Across the heavy high-backed chairs in the bed-room lay various neatly-folded garments, one of which was the black gown with pudding sleeves commonly worn in public by the eighteenth-century divine, while at the bottom of the bed hung a clerical-looking periwig. In the bed itself, and leaning towards a tall wax candle at his side (which from a faint smell of singed woollen still lingering about the chamber, must recently have come into contact with the now tucked-back bed-curtain), was a gentleman of forty or thereabouts, writing in a very small hand upon a very large sheet of paper, folded, for greater convenience, into one long horizontal slip. He had dark, fierce-looking eyebrows, an aquiline nose, full-lidded and rather prominent clear blue eyes, a firmly-cut, handsome mouth, and a wide massive forehead, the extent of which was, for the moment, abnormally exaggerated by the fact that, in the energy of composition, the fur-lined cap he had substituted for his wig had been slightly tilted backward. As his task proceeded, his expression altered from time to time; now growing grave and stern, now inexpressibly soft and tender. Occasionally the look almost passed into a kind of grimace, resembling nothing so much as

the imitative motion of the lips which one makes in speaking to a pet bird. He continued writing until, in the distance, the step of the watchman—first pausing deliberately, then moving slowly forward for a few paces—was heard in the street below. “Past twelve o’clock!” came a wheezy cry at the window. “Paaaaast twelvve o’clock!” followed the writer, dragging out his letters so as to reproduce the speaker’s drawl. After this he rapidly set down a string of words in what looked like some unknown tongue, ending off with a trail of seeming hieroglyphics: “*Nite, nown deelest sollahs. Nite dee litt MD, Pdfr’s MD. Rove Pdfr, poo Pdfr, MD MD MD FW FW FW Lele Lele Lele Lele michar MD.*” Then, tucking his paper under his pillow, he popped out his guttering candle, and turning round upon his side with a smile of exceeding sweetness, settled himself to sleep.

Austin Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes: Second Series*. Oxford University Press. Reprinted by the kind permission of Mr. A. T. A. Dobson and of Mr. Humphrey Milford of the Oxford University Press.

QUEEQUEG

Whether that mattress was stuffed with corn-cobs or broken crockery, there is no telling, but I rolled about a good deal, and could not sleep for a long time. At last I slid off into a light doze, and had pretty nearly made a good offing towards the land of Nod, when I heard a heavy footfall in the passage, and saw a glimmer of light come into the room from under the door.

Lord save me, thinks I, this must be the harpooner, the infernal head-pedlar. But I lay perfectly still, and resolved not to say a word till spoken to. Holding a light in one hand, and that identical New Zealand head

in the other, the stranger entered the room, and without looking towards the bed, placed his candle a good way off from me on the floor in one corner, and then began working away at the knotted cords of the large bag before spoken of as being in the room. I was all eagerness to see his face, but he kept it averted for some time while employed in unlacing the bag's mouth. This accomplished, however, he turned round—when, good heavens! what a sight! Such a face! It was of a dark, purplish, yellow colour, here and there stuck over with large, blackish looking squares. Yes, it's just as I thought, he's a terrible bedfellow; he's been in a fight, got dreadfully cut, and here he is, just from the surgeon. But at that moment he chanced to turn his face so towards the light that I plainly saw they could not be sticking-plasters at all, those black squares on his cheeks. They were stains of some sort or other. At first I knew not what to make of this; but soon an inkling of the truth occurred to me. I remembered a story of a white man—a whaleman too—who, falling among the cannibals, had been tattooed by them. I concluded that this harpooner, in the course of his distant voyages, must have met with a similar adventure. And what is it, thought I, after all! It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any sort of skin. But then, what to make of his unearthly complexion, that part of it, I mean, lying round about, and completely independent of the squares of tattooing. To be sure, it might be nothing but a good coat of tropical tanning; but I never heard of a hot sun's tanning a white man into a purplish yellow one. However, I had never been in the South Seas; and perhaps the sun there produced these extraordinary effects upon the skin. Now, while all these ideas were passing through me like lightning, this harpooner never noticed me at all. But, after

some difficulty having opened his bag, he commenced fumbling in it, and presently pulled out a sort of tomahawk, and a sealskin wallet with the hair on. Placing these on the old chest in the middle of the room, he then took the New Zealand head—a ghastly thing enough—and crammed it down into the bag. He now took off his hat—a new beaver hat—when I came nigh singing out with fresh surprise. There was no hair on his head—none to speak of at least—nothing but a small scalp-knot twisted up on his forehead. His bald purplish head now looked for all the world like a mildewed skull. Had not the stranger stood between me and the door, I would have bolted out of it quicker than ever I bolted a dinner. . . .

Meanwhile, he continued the business of undressing, and at last showed his chest and arms. As I live, these covered parts of him were checkered with the same dark squares as his face; his back, too, was all over the same dark squares; he seemed to have been in a Thirty Years' War, and just escaped from it with a sticking-plaster shirt. Still more, his very legs were marked, as if a parcel of dark green frogs were running up the trunks of young palms. It was now quite plain that he must be some abominable savage or other shipped aboard of a whaleman in the South Seas, and so landed in this Christian country. I quaked to think of it. A pedlar of heads, too—perhaps the heads of his own brothers. He might take a fancy to mine—heavens! look at that tomahawk!

But there was no time for shuddering, for now the savage went about something that completely fascinated my attention and convinced me that he must indeed be a heathen. Going to his heavy grego, or wrapall, or dreadnaught, which he had previously hung on a chair,

he fumbled in the pockets, and produced at length a curious little deformed image with a hunch on its back, and exactly the colour of a three days' old Congo baby. Remembering the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black mannikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner. But seeing that it was not at all limber, and that it glistened a good deal like polished ebony, I concluded that it must be nothing but a wooden idol, which indeed it proved to be. For now the savage goes up to the empty fireplace, and removing the papered fireboard, sets up this little hunchbacked image, like a tenpin, between the andirons. The chimney jambs and all the bricks inside were very sooty, so that I thought this fireplace made a very appropriate little shrine or chapel for this Congo idol.

I now screwed my eyes hard towards this half-hidden image, feeling but ill at ease meantime—to see what was next to follow. First he takes about a double handful of shavings out of his grego pocket, and places them carefully before the idol; then laying a bit of ship biscuit on top and applying the flame from the lamp, he kindled the shavings into a sacrificial blaze. Presently, after many hasty snatches into the fire, and still hastier withdrawal of his fingers (whereby he seemed to be scorching them badly), he at last succeeded in drawing out the biscuit; then blowing off the heat and ashes a little, he made a polite offer of it to the little negro. But the little devil did not seem to fancy such dry sort of fare at all; he never moved his lips. All these strange antics were accompanied by still stranger guttural noises from the devotee, who seemed to be praying in a sing-song or else singing some pagan psalmody or other, during which his face twitched about in the most unnatural manner. At last extinguishing the fire, he took the idol

up very unceremoniously, and bagged it again in his grego pocket as carelessly as if he were a sportsman bagging a dead woodcock. . . .

The interval I spent in deliberating what to say was a fatal one. Taking up his tomahawk from the table, he examined the head of it for an instant, and then holding it to the light, with his mouth at the handle, he puffed out great clouds of tobacco smoke. The next moment the light was extinguished, and this wild cannibal, tomahawk between his teeth, sprang into bed with me. I sang out, I could not help it now; and giving a sudden grunt of astonishment, he began feeling me.

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*. By permission
of L. C. Page & Company.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The good man, he was now getting old, toward sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute, expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stepped; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden,

high-aspiring, and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and singsong; he spoke as if preaching—you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his “object” and “subject,” terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sang and snuffled them into “om-m-mject,” and “sum-m-mject,” with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising.

Thomas Carlyle, *Life of John Sterling*.

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES

A most bland-smiling, semi-quizzical, affectionate, high-bred Italianized little man, who has long olive-blond hair, a dimple, next to no chin, and flings his arm round your neck when he addresses you in public society!

ALFRED TENNYSON

One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusty-dark hair; bright-laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy;—smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic,—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe.

DANIEL WEBSTER

Not many days ago I saw at breakfast the notablest of all your Notabilities, Daniel Webster. He is a mag-

nificent specimen; you might say to all the world, This is your Yankee Englishman, such Limbs *we* make in Yankeeland! As a Logic-fencer, Advocate, or Parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back him at first sight against all the extant world. The tanned complexion, that amorphous crag-like face; the dull black eyes under their precipice of brows, like dull anthracite furnaces, needing only to be *blown*; the mastiff-mouth, accurately closed:—I have not traced as much of *silent Berserkir-rage*, that I remember of, in any other man. “I guess I should not like to be *your* nigger!”—Webster is not loquacious, but he is pertinent, conclusive; a dignified, perfectly bred man, though not English in breeding; a man worthy of the best reception from us; and meeting such, I understand.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

We met first, some four years ago, on Cheyne Walk here: a tall, broad, burly man, with gray hair and large, fierce-rolling eyes; of the most restless, impetuous vivacity, not to be held in by the most perfect breeding,—expressing itself in high-colored superlatives, indeed in reckless exaggeration, now and then in a dry sharp laugh, not of sport but of mockery; a wild man whom no extent of culture has been able to tame!

BRONSON ALCOTT

He is a genial, innocent, simple-hearted man, of much natural intelligence and goodness, with an air of rusticity, veracity, and dignity withal, which in many ways appeals to one. The good Alcott, with his long, lean face and figure, with his gray worn temples and mild radiant eyes; all bent on saving the world by a return to acorns

and the golden age; he comes before me like a kind of venerable Don Quixote, whom nobody can even laugh at without loving!

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Thackeray has very rarely come athwart me since his return: he is a big fellow, soul and body; of many gifts and qualities (particularly in the Hogarth line, with a dash of Sterne superadded), of enormous *appetite* withal, and very uncertain and chaotic in all points except his *outer breeding*, which is fixed enough, and *perfect* according to the modern English style. I rather dread explosions in his history. A *big*, fierce, weeping, hungry man; not a strong one.

The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson. By permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.

O. P. PYM

O. P. Pym, the colossal Pym, that vast and rolling figure, who never knew what he was to write about until he dipped grandly, an author in such demand that on the foggy evening which starts our story his publishers have had his boots removed lest he slip thoughtlessly round the corner before his work is done, as was the great man's way . . . alack! does no one remember Pym for himself? . . .

This is the house, 22 Little Owlet Street, Marylebone, but which were his rooms it is less easy to determine, for he was a lodger who flitted placidly from floor to floor according to the state of his finances, carrying his apparel and other belongings in one great armful, and spilling by the way. On this particular evening he was on the

second floor front, which had a fireplace in the corner, furniture all his landlady's and mostly horsehair, little to suggest his calling save a noble saucerful of ink, and nothing to draw attention from Pym, who lolled, gross and massive, on a sofa, one leg over the back of it, the other drooping, his arms extended, and his pipe, which he could find nowhere, thrust between the buttons of his waistcoat, an agreeable pipe-rack. He wore a yellow dressing-gown, or could scarcely be said to wear it, for such of it as was not around his neck he had converted into a cushion for his head, which is perhaps the part of him we should have turned to first. It was a big round head, the plentiful gray hair in tangles, possibly because in Pym's last flitting the comb had dropped over the banisters; the features were ugly and beyond life-size, yet the forehead had altered little except in color since the day when he was near being made a fellow of his college; there was sensitiveness left in the thick nose, humour in the eyes, though they so often watered; the face had gone to flabbiness at last, but not without some lines and dents, as if the head had resisted the body for a space before the whole man rolled contentedly downhill.

He had no beard. "Young man, let your beard grow." Those who have forgotten all else about Pym may recall him in these words. They were his one counsel to literary aspirants, who, according as they took it, are now bearded and prosperous or shaven and on the rates. To shave cost threepence, another threepence for loss of time—nearly ten pounds a year, three hundred pounds since Pym's chin first bristled. With his beard he could have bought an annuity or a cottage in the country, he could have had a wife and children and driven a dog-cart, and been made a church-warden. All gone, all shaved, and for what? When he asked this question he

would move his hand across his chin with a sigh, and so, bravely to the barber's.

Pym was at present suffering from an ailment that had spread him out on that sofa again and again—acute disinclination to work. . . .

Outside, the fog kept changing at intervals from black to white, as lazily from white to black, (the monster blinking); there was not a sound from the street save of pedestrians tapping with their sticks on the pavement as they moved forward warily, afraid of an embrace with the unknown; it might have been a city of blind beggars, one of them a boy.

At eight o'clock Pym rose with a groan and sat down in his stocking-soles to write his delicious tale. He was now alone. But though his legs were wound round his waste-paper basket, and he dipped often and loudly in the saucer, like one ringing at the door of Fancy, he could not get the idea that would set him going. He was still dipping for inspiration when T. Sandys, who had been told to find the second floor for himself, knocked at the door, and entered, quaking.

James Matthew Barrie, *Tommy and Grizel*.
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EUSTACIA VYE

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for awhile, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the

change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious alternation of caresses and blows that we endure now.

She was in person full-limbed, and somewhat heavy; without ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow: it closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow.

Her nerves extended into those tresses, and her temper could always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair was brushed she would instantly sink into stillness and look like the Sphinx. If in passing under one of the Egdon banks, any of the thick skeins were caught, as they sometimes were, by a prickly tuft of the large *ulex Europoeus*—which will act as a sort of hairbrush—she would go back a few steps, and pass against it a second time.

She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so: she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression.

The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl. Viewed sideways, the closing-

line of her lips formed, with almost geometric precision, the curve so well known in the arts of design as the *cima-recta*, or *ogee*. The sight of such a flexible bend as that on grim Egdon was quite an apparition. It was felt at once that that mouth did not come over from Sleswig with a band of Saxon pirates whose lips met like the two halves of a muffin. One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground in the South as fragments of forgotten marbles. So fine were the lines of her lips, that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. This keenness of corner was only blunted when she was given over to sudden fits of gloom, one of the phases of the night-side of sentiment which she knew too well for her years.

Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in "Athalie"; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola. In a dim light, and with a slight rearrangement of her hair, her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dew-drops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively, with as close an approximation to the antique as that which passes muster on many respected canvases.

But celestial imperiousness, love, wrath, and fervour had proved to be somewhat thrown away on netherward Egdon. Her power was limited, and the consciousness of this limitation had biassed her development. Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto. Her appearance accorded

well with this smouldering rebelliousness, and the shady splendour of her beauty was the real surface of the sad and stifled warmth within her. A true Tartarean dignity sat upon her brow, and not factitiously or with marks of constraint, for it had grown in her with years.

Across the upper part of her head she wore a thin fillet of black velvet, restraining the luxuriance of her shady hair, in a way which added much to this class of majesty by irregularly clouding her forehead. "Nothing can embellish a beautiful face more than a narrow band drawn over the brow," says Richter. Some of the neighbouring girls wore coloured ribbons for the same purpose, and sported metallic ornaments elsewhere; but if anyone suggested coloured ribbon and metallic ornaments to Eustacia Vye, she laughed and went on.

Thomas Hardy, *Return of the Native*.

THE DELANES

There they sat, as I had so often seen them, in Jack Alstrop's luxurious bookless library (I'm sure the rich rows behind the glass doors were hollow), while beyond the windows the pale twilight thickened to blue over Long Island lawns and woods and a moonlit streak of sea. No one ever looked out at *that*, except to conjecture what sort of weather there would be the next day for polo, or hunting, or racing, or whatever use the season required the face of nature to be put to; no one was aware of the twilight, the moon, or the blue shadows—and Hayley Delane least of all. Day after day, night after night, he sat anchored at somebody's poker-table, and fumbled absently with his cards. . . .

I turned back from the window to look at the group. The bringing of candles to the card-tables had scattered

pools of illumination throughout the shadowy room; in their radiance Delane's harsh head stood out like a cliff from a flowery plain. Perhaps it was only his bigness, his heaviness and swarthinness—perhaps his greater age, for he must have been at least fifteen years older than his wife and most of her friends; at any rate, I could never look at him without feeling that he belonged elsewhere, not so much in another society as in another age. For there was no doubt that the society he lived in suited him well enough. . . .

Turning from my contemplation of that great structural head, I looked at his wife. Her head was still like something in the making, something just flowering, a girl's head ringed with haze. Even the kindly candles betrayed the lines in her face, the paint on her lips, the peroxide on her hair; but they could not lessen her fluidity of outline, or the girlishness that lurked in her eyes, floating up from their depths like a startled Naiad. There was an irreducible innocence about her, as there so often is about women who have spent their time in amassing sentimental adventures. As I looked at the husband and wife, thus confronted above the cards, I marvelled more and more that it was she who ruled and he who bent the neck. You will see by this how young I still was.

Edith Wharton, *The Spark*. By permission of the publishers, D. Appleton and Company.

THE THREE FATES

Well, I've got some women now, and they're better than nothing. Three, without heads, who have been away getting framed. And you know they are more to me, after a fashion, than they can be to you, because, after a fashion also, they are women. I have come now

to think the sitting figure in spite of its beautiful drapery, rather an interruption to the sentiment. The two others are better than one has ever dreamed; I think these two women are the only things in the world that have been better than, in Bible phrase, it had entered into my heart to conceive. Who made them? Was it Pheidias? or do they not know? It is wonderful what company they are—noble company. . . . I have said the Fates are only women after a fashion; and that is one of the strangest things about them. They are wonderfully womanly—they are more womanly than any woman—and those girt draperies are drawn over a wonderful greatness of body instinct with sex; I do not see a line in them that could be a line in a man. And yet, when all is said, they are not women for us; they are of another race, immortal, separate; one has no wish to look at them with love, only with a sort of lowly adoration, physical, but wanting what is the soul of all love, whether admitted to oneself or not, hope; in a word, “the desire of the moth for the star.” O great white stars of eternal marble, O shapely, colossal women, and yet not women. It is not love that we seek from them, we do not desire to see their great eyes troubled with our passions, or the great impassive members contorted by any hope or pain or pleasure; only now and again, to be conscious that they exist, to have knowledge of them far off in cloudland, or feel their steady eyes shining, like quiet watchful stars, above the turmoil of the earth. . . . I wonder so much why they should have been *women*, and halt between two opinions in the matter. Sometimes I think it is because they were made by a man for men; sometimes, again, I think there is an abstract reason for it, and there is something more substantive about a woman than ever there can be about a man. I can conceive a great mythical woman, living

alone among inaccessible mountain-tops or in some lost island in the pagan seas, and ask no more. Whereas if I hear of a Hercules, I ask after Iole or Dejanira. I cannot think him a man without women. But I can think of these three deep-breasted women, living out all their days on remote hilltops, seeing the white dawn and the purple even, and the world outspread before them for ever, and no more to them for ever than a sight of the eyes, a hearing of the ears, a far-away interest in the inflexible heart, not pausing, not pitying, but austere with a holy austerity, rigid with a calm and passionless rigidity; and I find them none the less women to the end.

And think, if one could love a woman like that once, see her once grow pale with passion, and once wring your lips out upon hers, would it not be a small thing to die? Not that there is not a passion of a quite other sort, much less epic, far more dramatic and intimate, that comes out of the very frailty of perishable women; out of the lines of suffering that we see written about their eyes, and that we may wipe out if it were but for a moment; out of the thin hands, wrought and tempered in agony to a fineness of perception, that the indifferent or the merely happy cannot know; out of the tragedy that lies about such a love, and the pathetic incompleteness. This is another thing, and perhaps it is a higher. I look over my shoulder at the three great headless Madonnas, and they look back at me and do not move; see me, and through and over me, the foul life of the city dying to its embers already as the night draws on; and over miles and miles of silent country, set here and there with lit towns, thundered through here and there with night expresses scattering fire and smoke; and away to the ends of the earth, and the furthest star, and the blank regions of nothing; and they are not moved. My quiet, great-kneed, deep-

breasted, well-draped ladies of Necessity, I give my heart to you!

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Copyright, 1913, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

DANTE

To me it is a most touching face; perhaps of all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless;—significant of the whole history of Dante! I think it is the mournfulest face that ever was painted from reality; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in protest, and life-long unsundering battle, against the world. Affection all converted into indignation; an implacable indignation; slow, équable, silent, like that of a god! The eye, too, it looks out as in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of inquiry, Why the world was of such a sort? This is Dante: so he looks, this “voice of ten silent centuries,” and sings us his “mystic unfathomable song.”

Thomas Carlyle, “The Hero as Poet” from *Heroes and Hero-worship*.

LA GIOCONDA

La Gioconda is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that circle of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea, . . . The presence that rose thus so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Here is the head upon which all "the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how they would be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies had passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants, and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Ann, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the

delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.

Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*.

CHARACTERS MERGED WITH BACKGROUND

CLYM ON THE HEATH

Mrs. Yeobright had never before been to her son's house, and its exact position was unknown to her. She tried one ascending path and another, and found that they led her astray. Retracing her steps she came again to an open level, where she perceived at a distance a man at work. She went towards him and inquired the way.

The labourer pointed out the direction, and added, "Do you see that furze-cutter, ma'am, going up that footpath yond?"

Mrs. Yeobright strained her eyes, and at last said that she did perceive him.

"Well, if you follow him you can make no mistake. He's going to the same place, ma'am."

She followed the figure indicated. He appeared of a russet hue, not more distinguishable from the scene around him than the green caterpillar from the leaf it feeds on. His progress when actually walking was more rapid than Mrs. Yeobright's; but she was enabled to keep at an equable distance from him by his habit of

stopping whenever he came to a break of brambles, where he paused awhile. On coming in her turn to each of these spots she found half a dozen long limp brambles which he had cut from the bush during his halt and laid out straight beside the path. They were evidently intended for furze-faggot bonds which he meant to collect on his return.

The silent being who thus occupied himself seemed to be of no more account in life than an insect. He appeared as a mere parasite of the heath, fretting its surface in his daily labor as a moth frets a garment, entirely engrossed with its products, having no knowledge of anything in the world but fern, furze, heath, lichens, and moss.

The furze-cutter was so absorbed in the business of his journey that he never turned his head; and his leather-legged and gauntleted form at length became to her as nothing more than a moving handpost to show her the way.

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*.

EUSTACIA IN THE STORM

At half-past eleven, finding that the house was silent, Eustacia had lighted her candle, put on some warm outer wrappings, taken her bag in her hand, and, extinguishing the light again, descended the staircase. When she got into the outer air, she found that it had begun to rain, and as she stood pausing at the door it increased, threatening to come on heavily. But having committed herself to this line of action there was no retreating for bad weather, since Wildeve had been communicated with, and was probably even then waiting for her. The gloom of the night was funereal; all nature seemed clothed in

crape. The spiky points of the fir trees behind the house rose into the sky like the turrets and pinnacles of an abbey. Nothing below the horizon was visible save a light which was still burning in the cottage of Susan Nunsuch.

Eustacia opened her umbrella and went out from the enclosure by the steps over the bank, after which she was beyond all danger of being perceived. Skirting the pool she followed the path towards Rainbarrow, occasionally stumbling over twisted furze-roots, tufts of rushes, or oozing lumps of fleshy fungi, which at this season lay scattered about the heath like the rotten liver and lungs of some colossal animal. The moon and stars were closed up by cloud and rain to the degree of extinction. It was a night which led the traveller's thoughts instinctively to dwell on nocturnal scenes of disaster in the chronicles of the world, on all that is terrible and dark in history and legend—the last plague of Egypt, the destruction of Sennacherib's host, the agony in Gethsemane.

Eustacia at length reached Rainbarrow, and stood still there to think. Never was harmony more perfect than that between the chaos of her mind and the chaos of the world without. . . . Anyone who had stood by now would have pitied her, not so much on account of her exposure to weather, and isolation from all of humanity except the mouldered remains inside the Barrow; but for that other form of misery which was denoted by the slightly rocking movement that her feelings imparted to her person. Extreme unhappiness weighed visibly upon her. Between the drippings of the rain from her umbrella to her mantle, from her mantle to the heather, from the heather to the earth, very similar sounds could be heard coming from her lips; and the tearfulness of the outer scene was repeated upon her face. The wings of

her soul were broken by the cruel obstructiveness of all about her.

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*.

YANN AND SYLVESTRE

By midday, the *Marie* had assumed completely her foul-weather trim; with closed hatches and reefed sails, she bounded supple and light; amid the disorder that was commencing she had the air of playing as play the porpoises whom storm amuse. With only her fore-sail spread, she ran before the wind, according to the nautical expression which describes this particular trim.

Above, the heavens had become completely overcast, a closed, oppressive vault—with darker shadows spread over it in shapeless smudges; the impression was almost of an immobile dome, and it was necessary to look close to realise that on the contrary it was in a very whirl of movement: great grey sheets, hastening to pass, and replaced without ceasing by others which came from below the horizon; funereal tapestries unwinding as if from an inexhaustible roll. . . .

She ran before the wind, the *Marie*, ever more quickly—and the wind ran, too—before I know not what mysterious and terrible power. The wind, the sea, the *Marie*, the clouds, all were seized with the same madness of flight and speed in the same direction. That which ran ahead the fastest was the wind; then the great heavings of the water, more lumbering, slower, followed after it; then the *Marie*, dragged in the universal movement. The waves pursued her, with their pale crests, which rolled on in a perpetual crashing, and she—continually overtaken, continually outstripped—escaped them, none the less,

thanks to a wake she skillfully left behind her, an eddy on which their fury broke.

And in this movement of flight, the chief sensation was an illusion of lightness; without any difficulty, without an effort, one felt oneself leap. When the *Marie* rose on the waves, she rose without a shock as if the wind had lifted her, and her descent afterwards was like a sliding, causing those internal qualms one has in the simulated fallings of the switchback or in the imaginary descents of dreams. She slid backwards, as it were, the racing mountains slipping away from under her to continue their course, and then she was plunged again in one of those deep troughs which raced in their turn; without taking hurt, she touched the dreadful bottom of them, in a shower of spray which did not even wet her, but which sped on like everything else; which sped on and vanished ahead of her like smoke, like an intangible nothing. . . .

And so it went on continuously. But getting worse all the time. The waves followed one another, becoming ever more enormous, in long chains of mountains the valleys of which began to cause fear. And all this madness of motion became faster, under a sky that grew darker and darker, amid a noise that swelled until it became a roar.

It was very heavy weather, indeed, and it was necessary to keep watch. But, then, there was so much free space before them, space in which to run! And it happened also, that this year the *Marie* had spent the season in the most western part of the Iceland fisheries; so that this headlong flight towards the coast was so much way made in their voyage home.

Yann and Sylvestre were at the helm lashed by the waist. They were singing the song of "Jean-François de Nantes"; drunk with the movement and speed, they sang

at the top of their voices, laughing to find they could not hear each other amid all this unloosing of noise, turning round in their high spirits, to sing against the wind and losing breath for their pains. . . .

They were not afraid, having a very exact notion of what was manageable, having confidence in the solidity of their boat, in the strength of their arms. And also in the protection of the *faïence* Virgin who, during forty years of voyages to Iceland, had so often danced this same disagreeable dance, forever smiling between her bouquets of artificial flowers. . . . Jean-François de Nantes, Jean-François. Jean-François!

In general, they could see but a short distance around them: some hundreds of yards away everything seemed to end in monstrous waves whose pale crests stood erect, shutting out the view. One seemed always to be in the middle of a restricted scene, which, nevertheless, was perpetually changing; and, in addition, things were drowned in this kind of watery smoke, which scudded like a cloud, with an extreme swiftness, over all the surface of the sea.

But, from time to time, a rift appeared in the north-west from which a sudden shift of wind would come; then, a glancing light arrived from the horizon; a trailing reflection, making the dome of the sky seem darker, shed itself on the white agitated crests. And this rift was sad to see; these glimpsed distances, these vistas, oppressed the heart the more in that they made you realize only too well that there was the same chaos everywhere, the same fury—even beyond the great empty horizon, and infinitely beyond that again: the terror had no limits, and one was alone in the midst of it.

A gigantic clamor issued from things like an apocalyptic prelude sounding the alarm of the end of the world. And thousands of voices could be distinguished in it; from

above came whistling voices and deep voices, which seemed almost distant because they were immense; that was the wind, the mighty soul of this disorder, the invisible power directing the whole commotion. It was terrifying enough; but there were other noises, closer, more material, carrying a more imminent menace of destruction, which the tormented water gave out, spluttering as if on burning coals.

And still the storm waxed fiercer.

And in spite of their close trim, the sea began to cover them, to "eat" them as they said: first, the spray lashing from behind, then water in masses, hurled with smashing force. The waves rose higher still, more madly high, and the higher they rose the more jagged they became; one saw large greenish tatters of them, rags of falling water which the wind scattered everywhere. Some of them fell in heavy masses on the deck, with a smacking sound, and then the *Marie* shook in her whole being as if in pain. Now one could distinguish nothing, on account of all this white scattering foam; when the blasts roared more fiercely one saw it rushing in thicker clouds—like the dust of the roads in summer. A heavy rain, which had begun, fell slantwise also, almost horizontally, and these things together whistled, whipped, hurt like blows of a lash.

They remained both at the helm, bound and holding firm, clothed in their oilskins, which were tough and glistening as the skins of sharks; they had tied them tight at the neck, by tarred laces, and tight at the wrists and ankles, so as to keep the water out; and everything streamed over them, who bowed their backs when it fell too thick, buttressing themselves well so as not to be borne completely over. The skin of their cheeks burnt, and at every minute they caught their breath. After

each great mass of water had fallen, they looked at each other—and smiled to see the salt amassed in their beards.

In time, nevertheless, it became an extreme weariness, this fury which did not abate, which remained always at its same exasperated paroxysm. The rage of men, the rage of beasts, exhausts itself and quickly subsides; one has perforce to suffer long the rage of inanimate things which is without cause and without aim, mysterious as life and as death.

Jean-François de Nantes; Jean-François, Jean-François.

Through their lips, which had become white, the refrain of the old song passed still, but like an aphonous thing, continued from time to time unconsciously. The excess of movement and noise had made them drunk; it was in vain that they were young, their smiles grimaced on their teeth which chattered in their trembling from the cold; their eyes, half-closed under burning, flickering eyelids, remained fixed in a grim atony. Lashed to the helm like two marble buttresses, they made, with their cramped, blue fingers, the efforts that were necessary, almost without thinking, by simple habit of the muscles. With streaming hair, and contracted mouths, they had become strange, and in them reappeared a whole background of primitive savagery.

They could see no longer! They knew only that they were still there, side by side. At the moments of greatest danger, every time that behind them the new mountain of water rose up, overhanging, clamorous, horrible, dashing against their boat with a mighty thud, one of their hands moved involuntarily in the sign of the cross. They no longer thought of anything, not of Gaud, not of any woman, nor of any marriage. It was lasting too long and they were past all thinking; their intoxication of

noise, of weariness, of cold, obscured everything in their heads. They were now only two pillars of stiff flesh who kept the helm; only two vigorous beasts clinging there by instinct so that they should not die.

Pierre Loti, *The Iceland Fisherman*. Translated by W. P. Baines. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

LULU BETT IN THE PARLOUR

Lulu was dusting the parlour. The parlour was rarely used, but every morning it was dusted. By Lulu. She dusted the black walnut centre table, which was of Ina's choosing, and looked like Ina, shining, complacent, abundantly curved. The leather rocker, too, looked like Ina, brown, plumply upholstered, tipping back a bit. Really, the davenport looked like Ina, for its chintz pattern seemed to bear a design of lifted eyebrows and arch, reproachful eyes.

Lulu dusted the upright piano, and that was like Dwight—in a perpetual attitude of rearing back, with paws out, playful, but capable, too, of roaring a ready bass.

And the black fireplace—that was Mrs. Bett to the life. Colourless, fireless, and with a dust of ashes.

In the midst of all was Lulu herself reflected in the narrow pier glass, bodiless-looking in her blue gingham gown, but somehow alive. Natural.

This pier glass Lulu approached with expectation, not because of herself but because of the photograph on its low marble shelf. A large photograph on a little shelf-easel. A photograph of a man with evident eyes, evident lips, evident cheeks—and each of the six was rounded and convex. You could construct the rest of him.

Down there under the glass you could imagine him extending, rounded and convex, with plump hands and curly thumbs and snug clothes. It was Ninian Deacon, Dwight's brother.

Every day since his coming had been announced Lulu, dusting the parlour, had seen the photograph looking at her with eyes somehow new. Or were her own eyes new? She dusted this photograph with a difference, lifted, dusted, set it back, less as a process than as an experience. As she dusted the mirror and saw his trim semblance over against her own bodiless reflection, she hurried away. But the eyes of the picture followed her, and she liked it.

She dusted the south window-sill and saw Bobby Lar-kin come round the house and go to the wood-shed for the lawn mower. She heard the smooth blur of the cutter. But six times had Bobby traversed the lawn when Lulu saw Di emerge from the house. Di had been caring for her canary and she carried her bird-bath and went to the well, and Lulu divined that Di had deliberately disregarded the handy kitchen taps. Lulu dusted the south window and watched, and in her watching was no quality of spying or of criticism. Nor did she watch wistfully. Rather, she looked out on something in which she had never shared, could not by any chance imagine herself sharing.

Zona Gale, *Miss Lulu Bett*. D. Appleton and Company, 1922. By permission of the publishers.

THE PRISONER

While we were going towards this prisoner's cell, they told us his story. He had been a cabinet-maker's assistant, and when still quite a boy, joined a gang of

burglars to rob his own employer. Surprised during the robbery, he had blindly struck out, and killed his employer on the spot. He was sentenced to death, but, on the intervention of some Royalty . . . his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life.

When we entered his cell, he was standing perfectly still, gazing at his work. He looked quite sixty, though he could not have been more than forty-six—a bent, trembling ruin of a figure, covered by a drab-coloured apron. His face had the mealy hue and texture of all prisoners' faces. He seemed to have no features; his cheeks were hollow; his eyes large, but, looking back, I can't remember their colour—if, indeed, they had colour in them at all. As we passed in, one by one, through the iron door, he took off his round cap, drab-coloured too, like everything about him, showing his dusty, nearly bald head, with a few short grey hairs on end, and stood in an attitude of "attention," humbly staring at us. He was like an owl surprised by daylight. Have you ever seen a little child ill for the first time—full of bewilderment at its own suffering? His face was like that, but so extraordinarily gentle! We had seen many of the prisoners, and he was the only one that had that awful *gentleness*. The sound of his voice, too: "*Ja, Herr Direktor—nein, Herr Direktor!*" soft and despairing—I remember it now—there was not a breath of will-power left. . . . He held in his hand . . . a sheet of stiff paper, on which he had been transcribing the New Testament in letters from a code of writing for the deaf and dumb. When he passed his thin fingers over the type to show us how easily the deaf and dumb could read it, you could see that his hands were dusty like a miller's. There was nothing in the cell to produce that dust, and in my belief it was not dust on his hands, but some excretion from

that human plant running to seed. When he held the sheet of paper up, too, it trembled like the wing of an insect. One of us asked, who invented the system he was working at, mentioning some name. "*Nein, nein,*" he said, and stood shivering with eagerness to recollect the right name. At last he drooped his head, and mumbled out: "*Ah, Herr Direktor, ich kann nicht!*" Then all of a sudden the name came bursting from his lips. At that moment, for the first time, he actually looked like a man. I never before then realized the value of freedom; the real meaning of our relations with other human beings; the necessity for the mind's being burnished from minute to minute by sights and sounds, by the need for remembering and using what we remember. This fellow, you see, had no use for memory in his life; he was like a plant placed where no dew can possibly fall on it. To watch that look pass over his face at the mere remembrance of a name was like catching sight of a tiny scrap of green leaf left in the heart of a withered shrub. Man, I tell you, is wonderful—the most enduring creature that has ever been produced! . . . His world was not a large one; about fourteen feet by eight. He'd lived in it for twenty-seven years, without a mouse even for a friend. They do things thoroughly in prisons. Think of the tremendous vital force that must go to the making of the human organism, for a man to live through that. . . . What do you imagine . . . kept even a remnant of his reason alive?—Well, I'll tell you: While we were still looking at his "deaf and dumb" writing, he suddenly handed us a piece of wood about the size of a large photograph. It was the picture of a young girl, seated in the very centre of a garden, with bright-coloured flowers in her hand; in the background was a narrow, twisting stream with some rushes, and a queer bird, rather like a

raven, standing on the bank. And by the side of the girl a tree with large hanging fruits, strangely symmetrical, unlike any tree that ever grew, yet with something in it that is in all trees, a look as if they had spirits, and were the friends of man. The girl was staring straight at us with perfectly round, blue eyes, and the flowers she held in her hand seemed also to stare at us. The whole picture, it appeared to me, was full of—what shall I say?—a kind of wonder. It had all the crude colour and drawing of an early Italian painting, the same look of difficulty conquered by sheer devotion. One of us asked him if he had learnt to draw before his imprisonment; but the poor fellow misunderstood the question. "*Nein, nein,*" he said, "the Herr Direktor knows I had no model. It is a fancy picture!" And the smile he gave us would have made a devil weep! He had put into that picture all that his soul longed for—woman, flowers, birds, trees, blue sky, running water; and all the wonder of his spirit that he was cut off from them. He had been at work on it, they said, for eighteen years, destroying and repeating, until he had produced this, the hundredth version. It was a masterpiece. Yes, there he had been for twenty-seven years, condemned for life to this living death—without scent, sight, hearing, or touch of any natural object, without even the memory of them, evolving from his starved soul this vision of a young girl with eyes full of wonder, and flowers in her hand. It's the greatest triumph of the human spirit, and the greatest testimony to the power of Art that I have ever seen. . . .

So thick-skinned, however, is a man's mind that I didn't even then grasp the agony of that man's life. But I did later. I happened to see his eyes as he was trying to answer some question of the Governor's about his health. To my dying day I shall never forget them.

They were incarnate tragedy—all those eternities of solitude and silence he had lived through, all the eternities he had still to live through before they buried him in the grave-yard outside, were staring out of them. They had more sheer pitiful misery in them than all the eyes put together of all the free men I've ever seen. I couldn't stand the sight of them, and hurried out of the cell. I felt then, and ever since, what they say the Russians feel—for all their lapses into savagery—the sacredness of suffering. I felt that we ought all of us to have bowed down before him; that I, though I was free and righteous, was a charlatan and sinner in the face of that living crucifixion. Whatever crime he'd committed—I don't care what it was—that poor lost creature had been so sinned against that I was as dirt beneath his feet. When I think of him—there still, for all I know—I feel a sort of frenzy rising in me against my own kind. I feel the miserable aching of all the caged creatures in the world. . . .

On our way back, I remember . . . we drove through the Stadt Park. There, it was free and light enough; every kind of tree—limes, copper beeches, oaks, sycamores, poplars, birches, and apple trees in blossom, were giving out their scent; every branch and leaf was glistening with happiness. The place was full of birds, the symbols of freedom, fluttering about, singing their loudest in the sun. Yes, it was all enchanted ground. And I well remember thinking that in the whole range of Nature only men and spiders torture other creatures in that long-drawn-out kind of way; and only men do it in cold blood to their own species. So far as I know, that's a fact of natural history; and I can tell you that to see, once for all, as I did, in that man's eyes, its unutterable misery, is never to feel the same towards your own kind

again. That night I sat in a *café* window, listening to the music, the talk, the laughter, watching the people pass in the street—shop-folk, soldiers, merchants, officials, priests, beggars, aristocrats, women of pleasure, and the light streaming out from the windows, and the leaves just moving against the most wonderful, dark blue sky. But I saw and heard nothing of it all. I only saw the gentle, mealy-coloured face of that poor fellow, his eyes, and his dusty, trembling hands, and I saw the picture that he had painted there in hell. I've seen it ever since, whenever I see or hear of any sort of solitary caged creature.

From *A Motley* by John Galsworthy; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

GROUPS OF CHARACTERS

THE GAMBLERS

It was near four o'clock on a September day, so that the atmosphere was well brewed to a visible haze. There was deep stillness, broken only by a light rattle, a light chink, a small sweeping sound, and an occasional monotone in French, such as might be expected to issue from an ingeniously constructed automation. Round two long tables were gathered two serried crowds of human beings, all save one having their faces and attention bent on the tables. The one exception was a melancholy little boy, with his knees and calves simply in their natural clothing of epidermis, but for the rest of his person in a fancy dress. He alone had his face turned towards the doorway, and fixing on it the blank gaze of a bedizened child stationed as a masquerading advertisement on the plat-

MING SOLOMON OF

form of an itinerant show, stood close behind a lady deeply engaged at the roulette-table.

About this table fifty or sixty persons were assembled, many in the outer rows, where there was occasionally a deposit of new-comers, being mere spectators, only that one of them, usually a woman, might now and then be observed putting down a five-franc piece with a simpering air, just to see what the passion of gambling really was. Those who were taking their pleasure at a higher strength, and were absorbed in play, showed very distant varieties of European type: Livoanian and Spanish, Græco-Italian and miscellaneous German, English aristocratic and English plebeian. Here certainly was a striking admission of human equality. The white bejewelled fingers of an English countess were very near touching a bony, yellow, crab-like hand stretching a bared wrist to clutch a heap of coin,—a hand easy to sort with the square, gaunt face, deep-set eyes, grizzled eyebrows, and ill-combed scanty hair which seemed a slight metamorphosis of the vulture. And where else would her ladyship have graciously consented to sit by that dry-lipped feminine figure prematurely old, withered after short bloom like her artificial flowers, holding a shabby velvet reticule before her, and occasionally putting in her mouth the point with which she pricked her card? There, too, very near the fair countess, was a respectable London tradesman, blond and soft-handed, his sleek hair scrupulously parted behind and before, conscious of circulars addressed to the nobility and gentry, whose distinguished patronage enabled him to take his holidays fashionably, and to a certain extent in their distinguished company. Not his the gambler's passion that nullifies appetite, but a well-fed leisure, which in the intervals of winning money in business and spending it showily, sees no better resource

than winning money in play and spending it yet more showily. . . . In his bearing there might be something of the tradesman, but in his pleasures he was fit to rank with the owners of the oldest titles. Standing close to his chair was a handsome Italian, calm, statuesque, reaching across him to place the first pile of napoleons from a new bagful just brought him by an envoy with a scrolled mustache. The pile was in half a minute pushed over to an old bewigged woman with eyeglasses pinching her nose. There was a slight gleam, a faint mumbling smile about the lips of the old woman; but the statuesque Italian remained impassive, and—probably secure in an infallible system which placed his foot on the neck of chance—immediately prepared a new pile. So did a man with the air of an emaciated beau or worn-out libertine, who looked at life through one eyeglass, and held out his hand tremulously when he asked for change. It could surely be no severity of system, but rather some dream of white crows, or the induction that the 8th of the month was lucky, which inspired the fierce yet tottering impulsiveness of his play.

But while every single player differed markedly from every other, there was a certain uniform negativeness of expression which had the effect of a mask,—as if they had all eaten of some root that for the time compelled the brains of each to the same narrow monotony of action.

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*.

THE VENEERING DINNER PARTY

Mr. and Mrs. Veneering were bran-new people in a bran-new house in a bran-new quarter of London. Everything about the Veneerings was spick and span new. All their furniture was new, all their friends were

new, all their servants were new, their plate was new, their carriage was new, their harness was new, their horses were new, their pictures were new, they themselves were new, they were as newly married as was lawfully compatible with their having a bran-new baby, and if they had set up a great-grandfather, he would have come home in matting from the Pantechnicon, without a scratch upon him, French polished to the crown of his head. . . .

The great looking-glass above the sideboard reflects the table and the company. Reflects the new Veneering crest, in gold and eke in silver, frosted and also thawed, a camel of all work. The Heralds' College found out a Crusading ancestor for Veneering who bore a camel on his shield (or might have done it if he had thought of it), and a caravan of camels take charge of the fruit and flowers and candles, and kneel down to be loaded with salt. Reflects Veneering: forty, wavy-haired, dark, tending to corpulence, sly, mysterious, filmy—a kind of sufficiently well-looking veiled-prophet, not prophesying. Reflects Mrs. Veneering; fair, aquiline-nosed and fingered, not so much light hair as she might have, gorgeous in raiment and jewels, enthusiastic, propitiatory, conscious that a corner of her husband's veil is over herself. Reflects Podsnap; prosperously feeding, two little light-coloured wings, one on either side of his bald head, looking as like his hair-brushes as his hair, dissolving view of red beads on his forehead, large allowance of crumpled shirt-collar up behind. Reflects Mrs. Podsnap; fine woman for Professor Owen, quantity of bone, neck and nostrils like a rocking-horse, hard features, majestic head-dress in which Podsnap has hung golden offerings. Reflects Twemlow; grey, dry, polite First-Gentleman-In-Europe collar and cravat, cheeks drawn in as if he had made a great effort to retire into himself some years ago,

and had got so far and had never got any farther. Reflects mature young lady; raven locks, and complexion that lights up well when well-powdered—as it is—and carrying on considerably in the captivation of mature young gentleman; with too much nose in his face, too much ginger in his whiskers, too much torso in his waistcoat, too much sparkle in his studs, his eyes, his buttons, his talk and his teeth. Reflects charming old Lady Tippiṃs on Veneering's right; with an immense obtuse drab oblong face, like a face in a teaspoon, and a dyed Long Walk up the top of her head, as a convenient public approach to the bunch of false hair behind, pleased to patronise Mrs. Veneering opposite, who is pleased to be patronised. Reflects a certain "Mortimer," another of Veneering's oldest friends; who never was in the house before, and appears not to want to come again, who sits disconsolate on Mrs. Veneering's left, and who was inveigled by Lady Tippiṃs (a friend of his boyhood) to come to these people's and talk, and who won't talk. Reflects Eugene, friend of Mortimer; buried alive in the back of his chair, behind a shoulder—with a powder-epaulette on it—of the mature young lady, and gloomy resorting to the champagne chalice whenever proffered by the Analytical Chemist. Lastly the looking-glass reflects Boots and Brewer, and two other stuffed Buffers interposed between the rest of the company and possible accidents.

Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*.

THE PUBLIC WARD

He lay there, day after day, conscious of nothing but the stabbing of a red-hot iron boring through his chest and cutting off his breathing. Some one would come every now and then and pour port wine and naphtha into

his mouth; and morning and evening he was washed carefully with warm water by gentle hands. But little by little the room grew lighter, and his gruel began to have some taste. And at last he began to distinguish the people in the beds near by, and to chat with them.

On his right lay a black-haired, yellow-faced dock labourer with a broken nose. His disease, whatever it might be, was clearly different from Peer's. He plagued the nurse with foul-mouthed complaints of the food, swearing he would report about it. On the other side lay an emaciated cobbler with a soft brown beard like the Christ pictures, and cheeks glowing with fever. He was dying of cancer. At right angles with him lay a man with the face and figure of a prophet—a Moses—all bushy white hair and beard; he was in the last stage of consumption, and his cough was like a riveting machine. "Huh!" he would groan, "if only I could get across to Germany, there'd be a chance for me yet." Beside him was a fellow with short beard and piercing eyes, who was a little off his head, and imagined himself a corporal of the Guards. Often at night the others would be awakened by his springing upright in bed and calling out: "Attention!"

One man lay moaning and groaning all the time, turning from side to side of a body covered with sores. But one day he managed to swallow some of the alcohol they used as lotion, and after that lay singing and weeping alternately. And there was a red-bearded man with glasses, a commercial traveller; he had put a bullet into his head, but the doctors had managed to get it out again, and now he lay and praised the Lord for his miraculous deliverance.

It was strange to Peer to lie awake at night in this great room in the dim light of the night-lamp; it seemed

as if beings from the land of the dead were stirring in those beds round about him. But in the daytime, when friends and relations of the patients came a-visiting, Peer could hardly keep from crying. The cobbler had a wife and a little girl who came and sat beside him, gazing at him as if they could never let him go. The prophet, too, had a wife, who wept inconsolably—and all the rest seemed to have some one or other to care for them. But where was Louise—why did Louise never come?

The man on the right had a sister, who came sweeping in, gorgeous in her trailing soiled silk dress. Her shoes were down at heel, but her hat was a wonder, with enormous plumes. "Hallo, Ugly! how goes it?" she said; and sat down and crossed her legs. Then the pair would talk mysteriously of people with strange names: "The Flea," "Cockroach," "The Galliot," "King Ring," and the like, evidently friends of theirs. One day she managed to bring in a small bottle of brandy, a present from "The Hedgehog," and smuggle it under the bedclothes. As soon as she had gone, and the coast was clear, Peer's neighbour drew out the bottle, managed to work the cork out, and offered him a drink. "Here's luck, sonny; do you good." No—Peer would rather not. Then followed a gurgling sound from the docker's bed, and soon he too was lying singing at the top of his voice.

Johan Bojer, *The Great Hunger*, translated by W. J. Alexander Worster and C. Archer. By permission of the Century Co.

TEATIME IN THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM

I hated teatime in the housekeeper's room more than anything else at Bladesover. And more particularly I hated it when Mrs. Mackridge and Mrs. Booch and Mrs.

Latude-Fernay were staying in the house. They were, all three of them, pensioned-off servants. Old friends of Lady Drew's had rewarded them posthumously for a prolonged devotion to their minor comforts, and Mrs. Booch was also trustee for a favorite Skye terrier. Every year Lady Drew gave them an invitation—a reward and encouragement of virtue with especial reference to my mother and Miss Fison, the maid. They sat about in black and shiny and flouncy clothing adorned with gimp and beads, eating great quantities of cake, drinking much tea in a stately manner and reverberating remarks.

I remember these women as immense. No doubt they were of negotiable size, but I was only a very little chap, and they have assumed nightmare proportions in my mind. They loomed, they bulged, they impended. Mrs. Mackridge was large and dark; there was a marvel about her head, inasmuch as she was bald. She wore a dignified cap, and in front of that upon her brow, hair was *painted*. I have never seen the like since. She had been maid to the widow of Sir Roderick Blenderhasset Impey, some sort of governor or such-like portent in the East Indies, and from her remains—in Mrs. Mackridge—I judge Lady Impey was a very stupendous and crushing creature indeed. Lady Impey had been of the Juno type, haughty, unapproachable, given to irony and caustic wit. Mrs. Mackridge had no wit, but she had acquired the caustic voice and gesture along with the old satins and trimmings of the great lady. When she told you it was a fine morning, she seemed also to be telling you you were a fool and a low fool to boot; when she was spoken to, she had a way of acknowledging your poor tinkle of utterance with a voluminous, scornful "Haw!" that made you want to burn her alive. She also had a way of saying "Indade!" with a droop of the eyelids.

Mrs. Booch was a smaller woman, brown haired, with queer little curls on either side of her face, large blue eyes and a small set of stereotyped remarks that constituted her entire mental range. Mrs. Latude-Fernay has left, oddly enough, no memory at all except her name and the effect of a green-grey silk dress, all set with gold and blue buttons. I fancy she was a large blond. Then there was Miss Fison, the maid who served both Lady Drew and Miss Somerville, and at the end of the table opposite my mother, sat Rabbits, the butler. Rabbits, for a butler, was an unassuming man, and at tea he was not as you know butlers, but in a morning coat and a black tie with blue spots. Still, he was large, with side whiskers, even if his clean-shaven mouth was weak and little. I sat among these people on a high, hard, early Gregorian chair, trying to exist, like a feeble seedling amidst great rocks, and my mother sat with an eye upon me, resolute to suppress the slightest manifestation of vitality. It was hard on me, but perhaps it was also hard upon these rather over-fed, ageing, pretending people, that my youthful restlessness and rebellious, unbelieving eyes should be thrust in among their dignities.

H. G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duffield and Company.

DECKERS ON THE COAST

Down on the after-deck, shielded from sun and rain and the idle stare of the promenade, they were spread in a sprawling heap on Number Three hatch. Sixty, counting the children, as the ship left Colon. Nine hours later, what with the motion of the vessel and money troubles, the great negress in the purple kimono set up a roaring,

and she was got out of the crowd somehow; and then there were sixty-one.

In that congested microcosm, however, this was no more than an ephemeral inconvenience. It was more or less perplexing to a spectator how so many of them, with their diversities of sleeping paraphernalia, had contrived to embed themselves in a species of human mosaic, upon a thirty by twenty-five hatch. Nevertheless, it was not inadequate. They overflowed on all four sides, spilling from camp-bedsteads set solidly athwart the gangways, snoring on bags of dunnage draped upon the winches (which were still hot, and caused occasional squeals as some small darky clutched the pipes and cylinders), and dispersing upon the bulwarks, where several were holding secret communication with the heaving waters.

As it grew dark, a huge wired bowl was suddenly turned on, and the assembled voyagers were flooded with yellow rays. It was easy to see that some of these people were accustomed to this method of traveling and had grown expert in dealing with the minor problems of existence in such circumstances. There was a girl, for instance, on the port side, who had brought her own narrow iron bed, with sheets, and who revealed the skill of a quick-change artist in divesting herself of her shore finery and appearing as if by magic, in a scarlet peignoir, her hair cascading over brown shoulders, and between her lips a cigarette offered by an appreciative saloon-waiter, who, with one eye cocked to watch the long port alley for the second steward's approach, was laying the foundations of, let us hope, an enduring friendship.

There was the aged negro, so grizzled that he seemed incredible and out of place save in an advertisement, who sat on a basket suitcase on the deck and read slowly, and with devastating enunciation, from the Old Testament.

There was the perennial and solitary vagabond, in dire need of a shave, his feet thrust into soiled rope-soled canvas shoes, his head bound in a calico underskirt borrowed from a neighbor, already sound asleep.

Others were less easy. Again and again they rose from their chairs and beds, and settled themselves in supposedly more comfortable attitudes. A mother, with her three, all on one strip of canvas and laid out as if for interment, was periodically aroused by her offspring in monotonous rotation. Fed, their dark little faces still moist from the suckling, they fell back and slept instantly, lying in utter and innocent nakedness like statues of polished chalcidony. A couple, man and woman, perplexing enough to the European unversed in the life of the Coast, fondled one another and chuckled at intervals at their own whispered remarks. Perplexing, since he was a heavy blond young man with a silky beard concealing a weak chin, while she was a vigorous and beautiful quadroon, the wedding ring conspicuous on her finger as she lolled in her chair, alert, intelligent, bright as a new penny when she levelled her gaze upon an appraising saloon-waiter or scullion who meditated an advance. Less easy, these, since they were just married, and the future in Calomar, whither he was bound as a clerk, was uncertain.

Beyond them, and engaged in rapid converse with some of the crew, stood a man of uncertain age. His cap was of some furry fabric spotted to resemble the skin of a leopard, and his soiled linen suit hung loosely upon him. His face was drawn into vertical lines, into harsh furrows, and the expression of his irascible and bloodshot eyes was that of a man engaged in secret warfare with Fate. At times he turned, and the light from the cargo-cluster illumined that ravaged countenance with dreadful fidelity. There was an air of excitement about him, too,

since he talked with the rapidity and gestures of one who lacked time to complete his story; and he looked around into the glare of the light as if he saw someone in the distance, overtaking him.

And he had competitors: from the recumbent forms arose a murmurous cacophony of diverse organs. Children whimpered and squalled; four Negroes snarled and gabbled as they shot craps; a piratical creature strummed on a banjo and hummed; while on the starboard side, a furious uproar raged around a gray-haired virago, fit model for the Eumenides herself, who was accusing a smiling youth of stealing a bottle of eau-de-cologne from her bag. This was the most popular show of the evening. The dame sat there on her bed, her chemise sliding from her incredible shoulders, her bony arms and jaws moving in a convulsive synchronism. Men stood over her, with folded arms, and watched every movement, as if she were some monotonous automaton they had wound up and set going. This impression, that she was not human, but a clockwork affair, gained force when, of a sudden, without warning, as she foamed and choked, and lunged toward her adversary to strike him down to death, some word spoken amid the din made her stop and, collapsing upon the pallet, she shrieked with laughter. She seemed to have run down, her spring broken, her interior mechanism gone derelict.

But the man on the other side of the hatch took no notice of these distractions. He was driven by something more than a mere momentary gust of animal passion. His incessant watchfulness, as he turned his head again and again toward the light, reminded one of a wild animal devouring his prey in an alien jungle. Like a wild animal, too, he took no notice of the snapping jackals near him, or of the natural noises—the booming of the

wind now rising, the rattle and flap of the awning, the sough and spit of the sea along the side. He held the three men in white jackets in subjection to his vibrating finger and swift impetuous speech. They made no sign, save to spit and flick ash from cigarettes, but they remained. Here was necromancy, since they knew the steward was already searching angrily for them. They remained. The dinner-gong thrummed musically along the corridors, as the bell-hop moved to and fro. They remained. The figure of the second steward, spick and span, shaven to pink perfection, emerged smartly from the port alley. They saw him and moved, yet dominated by the cadaverous being in his dirty linen suit, who was offering them, so to speak, the kingdoms of the world. And then the steward saw them, and they rushed into the starboard alley toward the kitchen, leaving the necromancer to sink down on a yellow leatherette suitcase and fumble in his pocket for a cigarette.

William McFee, "Deckers on the Coast," in *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1923. By permission of Mr. McFee and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

THE FORSYTES

Over against the piano a man of bulk and stature was wearing two waistcoats on his wide chest, two waistcoats and a ruby pin, instead of the single satin waistcoat and diamond pin of more usual occasions, and his shaven, square, old face, the colour of pale leather, with pale eyes, had its most dignified look, above his satin stock. This was Swithin Forsyte. Close to the window, where he could get more than his fair share of fresh air, the other twin, James—the fat and the lean of it, old Jolyon called these brothers—like the bulky Swithin, over six feet in

height, but very lean, as though destined from his birth to strike a balance and maintain an average, brooded over the scene with his permanent stoop; his gray eyes had an air of fixed absorption in some secret worry, broken at intervals by a rapid, shifting scrutiny of surrounding facts; his cheeks, thinned by two parallel folds, and a long, clean-shaven upper lip, were framed with Dundreary whiskers. In his hands he turned and turned a piece of china. Not far off, listening to a lady in brown, his only son Soames, pale and well-shaved, dark-haired, rather bald, had poked his chin up sideways, carrying his nose with that aforesaid appearance of "sniff," as though despising an egg which he knew he could not digest. Behind him his cousin, the tall George, son of the fifth Forsyte, Roger, had a Quilpish look on his fleshy face, pondering one of his sardonic jests.

Something inherent to the occasion had affected them all.

Seated in a row close to one another were three ladies—Aunts Ann, Hester (the two Forsyte maids), and Juley (short for Julia), who not in first youth had so far forgotten herself as to marry Septimus Small, a man of poor constitution. She had survived him for many years. With her elder and younger sister she lived now in the house of Timothy, her sixth and youngest brother, on the Bayswater Road. Each of these ladies held fans in their hands, and each with some touch of colour, some emphatic feather or brooch, testified to the solemnity of the opportunity.

In the centre of the room, under the chandelier, as became a host, stood the head of the family, old Jolyon himself. Eighty years of age, with his fine, white hair, his dome-like forehead, his little, dark gray eyes, and an immense white moustache, which drooped and spread

below the level of his strong jaw, he had a patriarchal look, and in spite of lean cheeks and hollows at his temples, seemed master of perennial youth. He held himself extremely upright, and his shrewd steady eyes had lost none of their clear shining. Thus he gave an impression of superiority to the doubts and dislikes of smaller men. Having had his own way for innumerable years, he had earned a prescriptive right to it. It would never have occurred to old Jolyon that it was necessary to wear a look of doubt or defiance.

Between him and the four other brothers who were present, James, Swithin, Nicholas, and Roger, there was much difference, much similarity. In turn, each of these four brothers was very different from the other, yet they, too, were alike.

Through the varying features and expressions of those fine faces could be marked a certain steadfastness of chin, underlying surface distinctions, marking a racial stamp, too prehistoric to trace, too remote and permanent to discuss—the very hall-mark and guarantee of the family fortunes.

Among the younger generation, in the tall, bull-like George, in pallid strenuous Archibald, in young Nicholas and his sweet and tentative obstinacy, in the grave and foppishly determined Eustace, there was this same stamp—less meaningful, perhaps, but unmistakable—a sign of something ineradicable in the family soul.

John Galsworthy, *Man of Property*. Copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

CHAPTER VII

Impressionistic Description

Something has already been said about the recrudescence of interest among modern artists in impressionism. Into that movement in contemporary painting and music we cannot go, for the investigation would lead us too far afield; but we would find that something similar has been occurring in all the branches of art; in each of them we may find examples of the clarity, the lucidity, and the power which impressionism at its best produces, and in each of them we will detect also the vagueness and chaotic unintelligibility which results from its use by mediocre craftsmen. Impressionism in art is far from being either modern or new. It was, as has been suggested, the basis of the best writing among the Greeks, who excelled in clarity and precision of outline, and who realized that the artist who sees clearly and accurately has no need to pile up details. The suggestiveness of Sappho lies in her clear-cut simplicity; out of the multitude of impressions which surrounded her, her mind selected unerringly those details which are most exact in their outline, most universal in their appeal, so that, for more than two thousand years, readers have seen with her the "sweet apple that reddens on the tip of the topmost bough." The descriptions in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are almost entirely impressionistic. Chapters of psychological dissection of emotion could not compare with one sentence of Priam's as he stands before the slayer of his son begging that the dead body may be given to him: "And I have endured—the like

whereof no soul upon the earth hath yet endured—to carry to my lips the hand of him who slew my child”; or the mutability of fortune implied in the reply of Achilles: “Nay, and thou too, old man, in times past wert, as we hear, happy.” There is no lover of Homer who has not seen eternally “white-armed Nausicaa,” rousing herself from slumber after the visit of the dream-goddess, journeying in the midst of maidens hardly less fair than herself to the water’s edge, playing at ball in the meadow, standing, timid but proudly courageous, before the fearful stranger. Yet the most extended picture which Homer gives of her says no more than this: “And Nausicaa, dowered with beauty by the gods, stood by a pillar of the well-built roof, and marvelled at Odysseus.” What is true of Homer’s descriptions of people is equally true of all his descriptive touches. What better observation can one find that “kine of trailing gait and white-fleeced sheep”? The palace of Alcinoüs has come to signify, in literature, grandeur and magnificence; yet all that Alcinoüs himself said of it was: “my high house with floor of bronze.” The “lofty hut” which Achilles’ men built for him beside the field of battle was no mere temporary shelter, but a fortification in itself; we reconstruct it through the detail: “the door was barred by a single bolt of pine that three Achaians wont to drive home, and three drew back that mighty bar.”

[Impressionism in modern literature has taken on a new significance.] Its method is that of the Greeks; its effect something that they would not have understood. When John Gould Fletcher writes in *Prologue*:

The house that I write of faces the north;
No sun ever seeks
Its six white columns,
The nine great windows of its face,

his method is not unlike that of Homer, who describes a dwelling as "a great court with close-set palisades"; of the two descriptions, Fletcher's is the more definite and exact. Yet just here we find the first distinction between ancient and modern impressionism: the modern movement is self-conscious, and its details are studied and mannered; like the epics of Virgil and Milton, it is modelled upon originals which were not self-conscious; there is in the modern a too careful attention to detail. The author seems frequently to be not reporting simply what he saw, but looking for something which he believes should be there. The second difference between Greek and modern impressionism we may see in the last stanza of the poem of Fletcher's from which we have quoted:

Staring Ionic capitals
Peer in them,
Owl-like faces.

At once his house is given a mood which no Greek would have felt; it is surrounded not only by mystery, but by a vague terror which we feel though we do not understand it. We have become conscious of a realm which the Greeks did not know existed, and seldom even felt: the realm of the subconscious. We live in a dual universe, where two powers constantly struggle for our attention. Schiller, Schlegel, and others of the German Romanticists, recognizing this, found the reason for the new feeling in literature in the point of view which Christianity had brought into the world, a realization of what may be called "otherworldliness"; an insistence upon man's dual nature, his appreciation of his own finiteness and his restless striving for infinity. Contemporary writers find the change rather in modern psychology, with its insistence upon the "subliminal consciousness" and the operations

of the "subconscious self." At all events, modern impressionism, making conscious use of exactly the same methods as those of the Greeks, dealing in directness, concreteness, definiteness, succeeds in producing an effect of vague indefiniteness which is exactly opposite to the Greek effect.

What we have been saying would seem to apply also to the impressionism seen in Japanese art. Here, of course, we are faced with a barrier not only of language, but also of complete difference of racial psychology. Yet there seem to be—so far as one may judge from a most casual acquaintance with Japanese art and literature, the two different sorts of impressionism in older and newer Japanese art also. The Japanese prints which have had such a vogue in this country are simplicity itself: a bird on a bough, a trailing branch, a single blossom, a mountain in the distance. The Japanese revolt from our profusion of detail, our flowers massed together in bouquets, our elaborate decorations. Simplicity in line and color, an almost naked severity, characterizes their work. Here again a poem of John Gould Fletcher's, from his *Japanese Prints*, may illustrate. The first stanza is pure impressionism, whether Greek or Japanese:

The green and violet peacocks
With golden tails
Parade.

But the last stanza, by the use of one word, strikes the keynote of modern impressionism:

The green and violet peacocks,
Through the golden dusk
Showered upon them from the vine-hung lanterns
Stately, nostalgically,
Parade.

The description, in the first stanza simple and exact, has become conventionalized through the introduction of the "golden dusk"; but more than that the peacocks have been given a double significance. They are not only peacocks; not, indeed, principally peacocks; they are symbols; they possess knowledge, memories, desires beyond themselves; they parade *nostalgiacally*—a word which no Greek would have used, not only because of its ugliness of sound which is completely out of place in such a description, but because of its connotations and significance. Now this double suggestiveness, while untrue to the classical Greek spirit, seems not to be untrue to the spirit of much Japanese poetry. In many of their verses, simple, almost stark in their figures of speech, a double meaning is implied. The peculiar structure of the Japanese language, by which many words have both a concrete and an abstract signification, makes it rich in subtle and intricate double meanings; and the conscious attempt of much Japanese lyric poetry seems to be to express little, and suggest much. The student of impressionistic description will do well to read through a volume of translations from Japanese poetry—for example, the volume of *Japanese Lyrics*, translated by Lafcadio Hearn—and notice both the clarity of the pictures and the suggestiveness of meaning. These examples will serve to illustrate: ¹

Like a woman slipping off her *haori*—that is the appearance of the butterfly.

Perched upon the temple-bell, the butterfly sleeps.

Here her body lies, but her soul is far away, asleep in the arms

¹ The illustrations are all taken from *Japanese Lyrics*, translated by Lafcadio Hearn, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1915, and are reprinted by the permission of the publishers. The last one may well be compared with Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Prayer to Persephone*, in which the same idea is used.

of a man;—and the white-haired mother, little knowing her daughter's heart, is nursing only the body.

As for the Snow-Woman—even her best comb . . . is made of thick ice; and her hair-pin, too, is probably made of ice.

As Tanabata slumbers with her long sleeves rolled up, until the reddening of the dawn, do not, O stork of the river-shallows, awaken her by your cries.

As he is so young, he cannot know the way. . . . To the messenger of the underworld I will give a bribe, and entreat him, saying: "Do thou kindly take the little one upon thy back along the road."

Impressionism is, then, at once the most effective and the most dangerous of methods. There is the constant danger that in unskilful hands it will degenerate into mere vagueness, or, worse, into sentimentality. At its best, it may suggest infinity; at its worst, it will certainly achieve nonentity! More completely than any other form of description, it will prove the caliber of the writer—his observation, his insight, his ability to select, his power of suggestion. It is a method which has been used effectively by critics of music, painting, sculpture; it suits well the subject of Pater's *Sketches by Leonardo da Vinci* and Swinburne's *Sketches of Michael Angelo*, for it was the method of da Vinci and Michael Angelo in those sketches. The first drawings of an artist are often more powerful in their suggestiveness than are his finished portraits—for example, many of Holbein's sketches, mere lines and faintly shaded heads, yet certainly equal in power often to the finished portraits. There is a universal desire in mankind to fill in the details for himself; the heroines whom we imagine will always be more beautiful than the illustrations in books. It was not mere chance that Homer never described Helen of Troy, the eternal beauty of the world. What Leonardo da Vinci had done with a few strokes of the pencil, Pater does here with words: "a slave sitting in an uneasy inclined attitude, in some brief

interval of rest"; "the curves of the head of the child, following the little skull within, thin and fine as some sea-shell worn by the wind." Swinburne saw in a sketch by Michael Angelo "the group of two old men in hell: one looks up howling, with level face; one looks down with lips drawn back." In another sketch, the selection of details produces a picture, seen in a moment, not to be forgotten by anyone who either sees the sketch or reads Swinburne's description of it: "a youth with reverted head, wearing furry drapery with plummy fringes, has one leg drawn up and resting on a step; the face, as it looks back, is laughing with fear; the hysterical horror of some unseen thing is branded into the very life of its fair features."

Modern literature, both prose and poetry, is filled with impressionistic description. Stevenson, according to his own account of his training, spent much of his time trying to catch and fix in words momentary impressions. His letters are filled with such pictures as this:

a small orange moon, lost in a great world of blue evening. A few leafless boughs, and a bit of garden railing criss-cross its face.

Dickens' Mr. Jingle was in his way an impressionist, as his account of a castle will show:

'Ah! fine place,' said the stranger, 'glorious pile—frowning walls, tottering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases—Old cathedral too—earthy smell—pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps—little Saxon doors—confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres—queer customers these monks—Popes, and Lord Treasurers and all sorts of old fellows with great red faces, and broken noses, turning up every day—buff jerkins too—matchlocks—Sarcophagus—fine place—old legends too—strange stories—capital.'

Conrad's character in *Youth* saw the East in one lightning flash which he never forgot:

The scented obscurity of the shore was grouped into dark masses, a density of colossal clumps of vegetation probably—mute and fantastic shapes. And at their feet the semicircle of a beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave.

The fires on Rainbarrow in *The Return of the Native* with their flickering lights and shadows caught and fixed and intensified characteristics as does an impressionistic artist:

Shadowy eye-sockets, deep as those of a death's head, suddenly turned into pits of lustre; a lantern-jaw was cavernous, then it was shining; wrinkles were emphasized to ravines, or obliterated entirely by a changed ray. Nostrils were dark wells; sinews in old necks were gilt mouldings; things with no particular polish on them were glazed; bright objects, such as the tip of a furze-fork one of the men carried, were as glass; eyeballs gleamed like little lanterns.

The picture which Galsworthy's Prisoner painted had all the impressionistic power of a pre-Raphaelite painting:

It was the picture of a young girl, seated in the very centre of a garden, with bright-coloured flowers in her hand; in the background was a narrow, twisting stream with some rushes, and a queer bird, rather like a raven, standing on the bank. And by the side of the girl a tree with large hanging fruits, strangely symmetrical, unlike any tree that ever grew, yet with something in it that is in all trees, a look as if they had spirits and were the friends of man. The girl was staring straight at us with perfectly round blue eyes, and the flowers she held in her hand seemed also to stare at us. The whole picture, it seemed to me, was full of—what shall I say?—a kind of wonder.

Robert Cortes Holliday, rambling about unfamiliar streets of New York, looked toward the North River and saw "the tops of the buff funnels of ocean liners, and Whistleranean silhouettes of derricks, rising beyond"; at another time he writes:

This is Front Street. A white ship lies at the foot of it. Cranes rise at her side. Tugs, belching smoke, bob beyond. All about

are ancient warehouses, redolent of the Thames, with steep roofs; and sometimes stairs outside, and with tall shutters, a crescent-shaped hole in each.

Katherine Mansfield pictures in *Bliss* a character who in dress, manner, and point of view was neo-impressionistic; she wore a coat decorated with figures of monkeys, and expressed surprise when people stared at her; but the coat, as Katherine Mansfield shows, was more than an article of dress—it was a symbol:

And a funnier thing still was that now her coat was off she did look like a very intelligent monkey—who had even made that yellow silk dress out of scraped banana skins. And her amber earrings: they were like little dangling nuts.

Joseph Conrad was a master of the method. Who can forget his magnificent account of the beginning of a quarrel between two men of tremendous stature—no details, no insistence on the size of his giant, yet a whole chapter in a word, when he says: “He raised a *sculptural* arm.” Several of H. L. Mencken’s sketches in his *Prejudices—Fourth Series*, notably the *Shrine of Mnemosyne*, mark the extreme of the impressionistic method in prose: a series of pictures, each clear-cut, definite, each complete in a single sentence, having no connection other than that of the memory of the writer.

In contemporary poetry, we may find impressionistic description everywhere. Much, though not all, imagist and symbolist verse is impressionistic. Such a poet as “H. D.” has, in her method, the touch of a classical Greek, though she produces an entirely different effect. Louis Untermeyer says of Carl Sandburg that he possesses “the sharp and sympathetic gift of the etcher with his firm, clean-cut, and always suggestive lines”; this ability of Sandburg’s may be seen at its best in such short

poems as "Fog" and "Lost." Eunice Tietjens, in *The Most-Sacred Mountain* sketches in the Japanese manner:

The temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Edith Thomas describes evening thus:

Apple-green west and an orange bar,
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star.

Sherwood Anderson sees

Trains coming toward you out of the West—
Streaks of light on the long grey plains.

Adelaide Crapsey's "Triad" in *Cinquains* is possibly the high-water mark of the impressionistic method in one sentence:

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . .
the mouth of one
Just dead.

Logan Pearsall Smith, whose *Trivia* and *More Trivia* are among the finest examples in English of impressionistic prose, has expressed the whole attitude of the impressionistic writer in "The Kaleidoscope":¹

I find in my mind, in the miscellany of ideas and musings, a curious collection of little landscapes and pictures, shining and fading for no reason. Sometimes they are views in no way remarkable—the corner of a road, a heap of stones, an old gate. But there are many charming pictures, too: as I read, between my eyes and the book the Moon sheds down on harvest fields her chill of silver; I see autumnal avenues, with the leaves falling, or swept in heaps; and storms blow away my thoughts, with the rain beating forever on the fields. Then winter's upward glare

¹ From *Trivia*, by Logan Pearsall Smith. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co. Used by permission.

of snow appears; or the pink and delicate green of Spring in the windy sunshine; or cornfields and green waters, and youths bathing in Summer's golden heats.

And as I walk about, certain places haunt me: a cathedral rises above a dark blue foreign town, the colour of ivory in the sunset light; now I find myself in a French garden full of lilacs and bees, and shut-in sunshine, with the Mediterranean lounging and washing outside the walls; now in a little college library, with busts, and the green reflected light of Oxford lawns—and again I hear the bells, reminding me of the familiar Oxford hours.

IMPRESSIONISTIC DESCRIPTION

IMPRESSIONS

(Tuesday) If you had seen the moon rising, a perfect sphere of smoky gold, in the dark air above the trees, and the white loch thick with skaters, and the great hill, snow-sprinkled, overhead! It was a sight for a king. . . . (Wednesday) The little booths that hucksters set up around the edge were marked, each one by its little lamp. There were some fires too; and the light, and the shadows of the people who stood round them to warm themselves, made a strange pattern all round on the snow-covered ice. A few people with torches began to travel up and down the ice, a lit circle travelling along with them over the snow. A gigantic moon rose, meanwhile, over trees and the kirk on the promontory, among perturbed and vacillating clouds. The walk home was very solemn and strange. Once, through a broken gorge, we had a glimpse of a little space of mackerel sky, moon-litten, on the other side of the hill; the broken ridges standing grey and spectral between; and the hilltop over all, snow-white and strangely magnified in size.

Today I have been to Church, which has not improved my temper I must own. The clergyman did his best to

make me hate him, and I took refuge in that admirable poem the Song of Deborah and Barak; I should like to make a long scroll of painting (say to go all round a cornice) illustrative of this poem; with the people seen in the distance going stealthily on footpaths while the great highways go vacant; with the archers besetting the draw-wells; with the princess in hiding on the hills among the bleating sheep-flocks; with the overthrow of Sisera, the stars fighting against him in their courses and that ancient river, the river Kishon, sweeping him away in anger; with his mother looking and looking down the long road in the red sunset, and never a banner and never a spear-clump coming into sight, and her women with white faces round her, ready with lying comfort. To say nothing of the people on white asses.

I say, we have a splendid picture here in Edinburgh. A Ruysdael of which one can never tire: I think it is one of the best landscapes in the world; a grey still day, a grey still river, a rough oak wood on one shore, on the other chalky banks with very complicated footpaths, oak woods, a field where a man stands reaping, church towers relieved against the sky and a beautiful distance, neither blue nor green. It is so still, the light is so cool and temperate, the river woos you to bathe in it. O I like it!

This afternoon about six there was a small orange moon, lost in a great world of blue evening. A few leafless boughs, and a bit of garden railing, criss-cross its face; and below it there was blueness and the spread lights of Leith, lost in blue haze. To the east, the town, also subdued to the same blue, piled itself up, with here and there a lit window, until it could print off its outline against a faint patch of green and russet that remained behind the sunset.

I took my usual walk before turning in last night, and dallied over it a little. It was a cool, dark, solemn night, starry, but the sky charged with big black clouds. The lights in house windows you could see, but the houses themselves were lost in the general blackness. A church clock struck eleven as I went past, and rather startled me. The whiteness of the road was all I had to go by. I heard an express train roaring away down the coast into the night, and dying away sharply in the distance; it was like the noise of an enormous rocket, or a shot world, one would fancy. I suppose the darkness made me a little fanciful; but when at first I was puzzled by this great sound in the night, between sea and hills, I thought half seriously that it might be a world broken loose—this world to wit. I stood for I suppose five seconds with this looking-for of destruction in my head, not exactly frightened but put out; and I wanted badly not to be overwhelmed where I was, unless I could cry out a farewell with a great voice over the ruin and make myself heard.

I have found another "flowering isle." All this beautiful, quiet, sunlit day, I have been out in the country; down by the sea on my favorite coast between Granton and Queensferry. There was a delicate, delicious haze over the firth and sands on one side, and on the other was the shadow of the woods all riven with great golden rifts of sunshine. A little faint talk of waves upon the beach; the wild strange crying of seagulls over the sea; and the hoarse wood-pigeons and shrill, sweet robins full of their autumn love-making among the trees made up a delectable concerto of peaceful noises.

It is a magnificent glimmering moonlight night, with a wild, great west wind abroad, flapping above one like

an immense banner, and every now and again swooping furiously against my windows. The wind is too strong perhaps, and the trees are certainly too leafless for much of that wide rustle that we both remember; for there is only a sharp, angry, sibilant hiss, like breath drawn with the strength of the elements through shut teeth, that one hears between the gusts only.

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Copyright, 1913, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

ILLUSION

An old, old sea-wall, stretching between two boundless levels, green and blue;—on the right only rice-fields, reaching to the sky-line;—on the left only summer-silent sea, where fishing-craft of curious shapes are riding. Everything is steeped in white sun; and I am standing on the wall. Along its broad and grass-grown top a boy is running towards me,—running in sandals of wood,—the sea-breeze blowing aside the long sleeves of his robe as he runs, and baring his slender legs to the knee. Very fast he runs, springing upon his sandals;—and he has in his hand something to show me: a black dragon-fly, which he is holding carefully by the wings, lest it should hurt itself struggling. . . . With what sudden incommunicable pang do I watch the gracious little figure leaping in the light,—between those summer-silences of field and sea! . . . A delicate boy, with the blended charm of two races. . . . And how softly vivid all things under this milky radiance,—the smiling child-face with lips apart,—the twinkle of the light quick feet,—the shadows of grasses and of little stones! . . .

But, quickly as he runs, the child will come no nearer

to me,—the slim brown hand will never cling to mine. For this light is the light of a Japanese sun that set long years ago. . . . Never, dearest!—never shall we meet—not even when the stars are dead!

And yet,—can it be possible that I shall not remember?—that I shall not still see, in other million summers, the same sea-wall under the same white noon,—the same shadows of grasses and of little stones,—the running of the same little sandalled feet that will never, never reach my side?

The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn. By permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

DRAWINGS BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

Let us take some of these drawings, and pause over them awhile; and, first, one of those at Florence—the heads of a woman and a little child, set side by side, but each in its own separate frame. First of all, there is much pathos in the reappearance, in the fuller curves of the face of the child, of the sharper, more chastened lines of the worn and older face, which leaves no doubt that the heads are those of a little child and its mother. A feeling for maternity is indeed always characteristic of Leonardo; and this feeling is further indicated here by the half-humorous pathos of the diminutive, rounded shoulders of the child. You may note a like pathetic power in drawings of a young man, seated in a stooping posture, his face in his hands, as in sorrow; of a slave sitting in an uneasy inclined attitude, in some brief interval of rest; of a small Madonna and Child, peeping sideways in half-reassured terror, as a mighty griffin with bat-like wings, one of Leonardo's finest *inventions*, de-

scends suddenly from the air to snatch up a great wild beast wandering near them. But note in these, as that which especially belongs to art, the contour of the young man's hair, the poise of the slave's arm above his head, and the curves of the head of the child, following the little skull within, thin and fine as some sea-shell worn by the wind.

Take again another head, still more full of sentiment, but of a different kind, a little drawing in red chalk which every one will remember who has examined at all carefully the drawings by old masters at the Louvre. It is a face of doubtful sex, set in the shadow of its own hair, the cheek-line in high light against it, with something voluptuous and full in the eye-lids and the lips. Another drawing might pass for the same face in childhood, with parched and feverish lips, but much sweetness in the loose, short-waisted childish dress, with necklace and *bullæ*, and in the daintily bound hair. We might take the thread of suggestion which these two drawings offer, when thus set side by side, and, following it through the drawings at Florence, Venice, and Milan, construct a sort of series, illustrating better than anything else Leonardo's type of womanly beauty. Daughters of Herodias, with their fantastic head-dresses knotted and folded so strangely to leave the dainty oval of the face disengaged, they are not of the Christian family, or of Raphael's. They are the clairvoyants, through whom, as through delicate instruments, one becomes aware of the subtler forces of nature, and the modes of their action, all that is magnetic in it, all those finer conditions wherein material things rise to that subtlety of operation which constitutes them spiritual, where only the final nerve and the keener touch can follow. It is as if in certain significant examples we actually saw those forces at their

work on human flesh. Nervous, electric, faint always with some inexplicable faintness, these people seem to be subject to exceptional conditions, to feel powers at work in the common air unfelt by others, to become, as it were, the receptacle of them, and pass them on to us in a chain of secret influences.

Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*.

SKETCHES OF MICHAEL ANGELO

Here in one design is the likeness of perishable pleasure; vain Delight with all her children; one taller boy has drawn off a reverted and bearded mask, on which another lays hold with one hand, fingering it as with lust or curiosity; his other hand holds to the mother's knee; behind her a third child lurks and cowers; she, with a hard broad smile of dull pleasure, feeds her eyes on the sight of her own face in a hand-mirror. Fear and levity, cruelty and mystery, make up their mirth; evil seems to impend over all these joyous heads, to hide behind all these laughing features: they are things too light for hell, too low for heaven; bubbles of the earth, brilliant and transient and poisonous, blown out of unclean foam by the breath of meaner spirits, to glitter and quiver for a little under the beams of a mortal sun. Cruel and curious and ignorant, all their faces are full of mean beauty and shallow delight. Hard by, a troop of Loves haul after them, with mocking mouths and straining arms, a live human mask, a hollow face shorn off from the head, old and grim and sad, worn through and through with pain and time, from the vexed forehead to the sharp chin which grates against the ground; the eyes and lips full of suffering, sardonic and helpless; the face of one knowing his own fate, who has resigned himself sadly and scornfully

to the violence of base and light desires; the grave and great features all hardened into suffering and self-contempt.

But in one separate head there is more tragic attraction than in these: a woman's, three times studied, with divine and subtle care; sketched and resketched in youth and age, beautiful always beyond desire and cruel beyond words; fairer than heaven and more terrible than hell; pale with pride and weary with wrong-doing; a silent anger against God and man burns, white and repressed, through her clear features. In one drawing she wears a head-dress of eastern fashion rather than western, but in effect made out of the artist's mind only; plaited in the likeness of closely-welded scales as of a chrysalid serpent, raised and waved and rounded in the likeness of a sea-shell. In some inexplicable way all her ornaments seem to partake of her fatal nature, to bear upon them her brand of beauty fresh from hell; and this through no vulgar machinery of symbolism, no serpentine or otherwise bestial emblem: the bracelets and rings are innocent enough in shape and workmanship; but in touching her flesh they have become infected with deadly and malignant meaning. Broad bracelets divide the shapely splendor of her arms; over the nakedness of her firm and luminous breasts, just below the neck, there is passed a band as of metal. Her eyes are full of proud and passionless lust after gold and blood; her hair, close and curled, seems ready to shudder in sunder and divide into snakes. Her throat, full and fresh, round and hard to the eye as her bosom and arms, is erect and stately, the head set firm on it without any droop or lift of the chin; her mouth crueller than a tiger's, colder than a snake's, and beautiful beyond a woman's. She is the deadlier Venus incarnate . . .

After this the merely terrible designs of Michael Angelo are shorn of half their horror; even the single face as of one suddenly caught and suddenly released from hell, with wild drapery blown behind it by a wind not of this world, strikes upon the sight and memory of a student less deeply and sharply. . . . One devil indeed recalls at once the famous "ghost of a flea," having much of the same dull and liquorish violence of expression. Other sketches in the small chamber of his palace bring also to mind his great English disciple: the angry angel poised as in fierce descent; the falling figure with drawn-up legs, splendidly and violently designed; the reverted head, showing teeth and nostrils; the group of two old men in hell; one looks up howling, with level face; one looks down with lips drawn back. Nothing can surpass the fixed and savage agony of his face, immutable and imperishable. In the same room are other studies worth record: a Virgin and Child, unfinished, but of supreme strength and beauty; the child fully drawn, with small strong limbs outlined in faint red, rounded and magnificent; soft vigorous arms, and hands that press and cling. There is a design of a covered head, looking down; mournful, with nervous mouth, with clear and deep-set eyes; the nostril strong and curved. Another head, older, with thicker lips, is drawn by it in the same attitude.

Beside the Jezebel or Amestris of the Uffizj there is a figure of Fortune, with a face of cold exaltation and high clear beauty; strong wings expand behind her, or shadows rather of vast and veiled plumes; below her the wheel seems to pause, as in a lull of the perpetual race. This design was evidently the sketch out of which the picture of Fortune in the Corsini Palace was elaborated by some pupil of the master's. In that picture, as in the Venus and Cupid with mystic furniture of melancholy masks

and emblems in the background, lodged now in the last Tuscan chamber but one of the Uffizj, the meaner hand of the executive workman has failed to erase or overlay the great and fruitful thought of that divine mind in which their first conceptions lay and gathered form. The strong and laughing God treading with a vigorous wantonness the fair flesh of his mother; the goddess languid and effused like a broad-blown flower, her soft bright side pressed hard under his foot and nestling heel, her large arm lifted to wrest the arrow from his hand, with a lazy and angry mirth; and at her feet the shelves full of masks, sad inverted faces, heads of men overset, blind strings of broken puppets forgotten where they fell; all these are as clearly the device of Michel Angelo's great sad mind as the handiwork is clearly none of his. Near the sketch of Fortune is a strange figure, probably worked up into some later design. A youth with reverted head, wearing furry drapery with plummy fringes, has one leg drawn up and resting on a step; the face, as it looks back, is laughing with fear; the hysterical horror of some unseen thing is branded into the very life of its fair features. This violent laugh as of a child scared into madness subjects the whole figure, brilliant and supple in youth as it seems, to the transformation of terror. Upon this design also much tragic conjecture of allegory or story might be spent, and wasted.

Algernon Swinburne, *Essays and Studies*.

THE EAST

And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places, and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like faint mist at noon;

a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark. A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odors of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.

We had been pulling this finishing spell for eleven hours. Two pulled, and he whose turn it was to rest sat at the tiller. We had made out the red light in the bay and steered for it, guessing it must mark some small coasting port. We passed two vessels, outlandish and high-sterned, sleeping at anchor, and, approaching the light, now very dim, ran the boat's nose against the end of a jutting wharf. We were blind with fatigue. My men dropped the oars and fell off the thwarts as if dead. I made fast to a pile. A current rippled softly. The scented obscurity of the shore was grouped into vast masses, a density of colossal clumps of vegetation, probably—mute and fantastic shapes. And at their foot the semicircle of a beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave.

And I sat weary beyond expression, exulting like a conqueror, sleepless and entranced as if before a profound, a fateful enigma. . . . But when I opened my eyes again the silence was as complete as though it had never been broken. I was lying in a flood of light, and the sky

had never looked so far, so high, before. I opened my eyes and lay without moving.

And then I saw the men of the East—they were looking at me. The whole length of the jetty was full of people. I saw brown, bronze, yellow faces, the black eyes, the glitter, the color of an Eastern crowd. And all these beings stared without a murmur, without a sigh, without a movement. They stared down at the boats, at the sleeping men who at night had come to them from the sea. Nothing moved. The fronds of palms stood still against the sky. Not a branch stirred along the shore, and the brown roofs of hidden houses peeped through the green foliage, through the big leaves that hung shining and still like leaves forged of heavy metal. This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and somber, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise. And these were the men. I sat up suddenly. A wave of movement passed through the crowd from end to end, passed along the heads, swayed the bodies, ran along the jetty like a ripple on the water, like a breath of wind on a field—and all was still again. I see it now—the wide sweep of the bay, the glittering sands, the wealth of green infinite and varied, the sea blue like the sea of a dream, the crowd of attentive faces, the blaze of vivid color—the water reflecting it all, the curve of the shore, the jetty, the high-sterned outlandish craft floating still, and the three boats with tired men from the West sleeping unconscious of the land and the people and of the violence of sunshine. They slept thrown across the thwarts, curled on bottom-boards, in the careless attitudes of death. The head of the old skipper, leaning back in the stern of the long-boat, had fallen on his breast, and he looked as though he would never wake. Farther out old Mahon's face was upturned to the sky,

with the long white beard spread out on his breast, as though he had been shot where he sat at the tiller; and a man, all in a heap in the bows of the boat, slept with both arms embracing the stem-head and with his cheek laid on the gunwale. The East looked at them without a sound.

From *Youth*, by Joseph Conrad. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Page & Co.

THE FIRES ON RAINBARROW

While the men and lads were building the pile, a change took place in the mass of shade which denoted the distant landscape. Red suns and tufts of fire one by one began to arise, flecking the whole country round. They were the bonfires of other parishes and hamlets that were engaged in the same sort of commemoration. Some were distant, and stood in a dense atmosphere, so that bundles of pale strawlike beams radiated around them in the shape of a fan. Some were large and near, glowing scarlet-red from the shade, like wounds in a black hide. Some were Mænades, with winy faces and blown hair. These tintured the silent bosom of the clouds above them and lit up their ephemeral caves, which seemed thenceforth to become scalding caldrons. Perhaps as many as thirty bonfires could be counted within the whole bounds of the district . . .

The first tall flame from Rainbarrow sprang into the sky, attracting all eyes that had been fixed on the distant conflagrations back of their own attempt in the same kind. The cheerful blaze streaked the inner surface of the human circle—now increased by other stragglers, male and female—with its own gold livery, and even overlaid the dark turf around with a lively luminous-

ness, which softened off into obscurity where the barrow rounded downwards out of sight. . . .

It was as if the bonfire-makers were standing in some radiant upper-storey of the world, detached from and independent of the dark stretches below. The heath down there was now a vast abyss, and no longer a continuation of what they stood on; for their eyes, adapted to the blaze, could see nothing of the deeps beyond its influence. Occasionally, it is true, a more vigorous flare than usual from their faggots sent darting lights like aides-de-camp down the inclines to some distant bush, pool, or patch of white sand, kindling these to replies of the same color, till all was lost in darkness again. Then the whole black phenomenon beneath represented Limbo as viewed from the brink by the sublime Florentine in his vision, and the muttered articulations of the wind in the hollows were as complaints and petitions from the "souls of mighty worth" suspended therein. . . .

The brilliant lights and sooty shades which struggled upon the skin and clothes of the persons standing round caused their lineaments and general contours to be drawn with Düreresque vigour and dash. Yet the permanent moral expression of each face it was impossible to discover, for as the nimble flames towered, nodded, and swooped through the surrounding air, the blots of shade and flakes of light upon the countenances of the group changed shape and position endlessly. All was unstable; quivering as leaves, evanescent as lightning. Shadowy eye-sockets, deep as those of a death's head, suddenly turned into pits of lustre: a lantern-jaw was cavernous, then it was shining; wrinkles were emphasized to ravines, or obliterated entirely by a changed ray. Nostrils were dark wells; sinews in old necks were gilt mouldings; things with no particular polish on them were

glazed; bright objects, such as the tip of a furze-hook one of the men carried, were as glass; eyeballs glowed like little lanterns. Those whom Nature had depicted as merely quaint became grotesque, the grotesque became preternatural; for all was in extremity.

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*.

URIAH HEEP

When the pony-chaise stopped at the door, and my eyes were intent upon the house, I saw a cadaverous face appear at a small window on the ground floor (in a little round tower that formed one side of the house), and quickly disappear. The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It was quite as cadaverous as it had looked in the window, though in the grain of it there was that tinge of red which is sometimes to be observed in the skins of red-haired people. It belonged to a red-haired person—a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older—whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble; who had hardly any eyebrows, and no eyelashes, and eyes of a red-brown, so unsheltered and unshaded, that I remember wondering how he went to sleep. He was high-shouldered and bony; dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of a neck-cloth, buttoned up to the throat; and had a long, lank, skeleton hand, which particularly attracted my attention, as he stood at the pony's head, rubbing his chin with it, and looking up at us in the chaise. . . .

Uriah . . . was at work at a desk in this room, which had a brass frame on the top to hang papers upon, and on which the writing he was making a copy of was then hanging. Though his face was towards me, I thought, for some time, the writing being between us,

that he could not see me; but looking that way more attentively, it made me uncomfortable to observe that, every now and then, his sleepless eyes would come below the writing, like two red suns, and stealthily stare at me for I dare say a whole minute at a time, during which his pen went, or pretended to go, as cleverly as ever. I made several attempts to get out of their way—such as standing on a chair to look at a map on the other side of the room, and poring over the columns of a Kentish newspaper—but they always attracted me back again; and whenever I looked towards those two red suns, I was sure to find them, either just rising or just setting. . . .

. . . As I came back, I saw Uriah Heep shutting up the office; and, feeling friendly towards everybody, went in and spoke to him, and, at parting, gave him my hand. But, oh, what a clammy hand his was! as ghostly to the touch as to the sight! I rubbed mine afterwards, to warm it, *and to rub his off*. . . .

I found Uriah reading a great, fat book, with such demonstrative affection that his lank forefinger followed up every line as he read, and made clammy tracks along the page (or so I fully believed) like a snail.

“You are working late to-night, Uriah,” says I.

“Yes, Master Copperfield,” says Uriah.

As I was getting on the stool opposite, to talk to him more conveniently, I observed that he had not such a thing as a smile about him, and that he could only widen his mouth, and make two hard creases down his cheeks, one on each side, to stand for one. . . .

My stool was such a tower of observation, that as I watched him reading on again, . . . I observed that his nostrils, which were thin and pointed, with sharp dints in them, had a singular and most uncomfortable way of expanding and contracting themselves; that they seemed to

twinkle instead of his eyes, which hardly ever twinkled at all.

"I suppose you are quite a great lawyer?" I said, after looking at him for some time.

"Me, Master Copperfield?" said Uriah. "Oh, no. I'm a very 'umble person."

It was no fancy of mine about his hands, I observed; for he frequently ground the palms against each other as if to squeeze them dry and warm, often wiping them, in a stealthy way, on his pocket-handkerchief.

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*.

CHARACTERS FROM *THE MAN WHO WAS THURSDAY*

His dark red hair parted in the middle was literally like a woman's, and curved into the slow curls of a virgin in a pre-Raphaelite picture. From within this almost saintly oval, however, his face projected suddenly broad and brutal, the chin carried forward with a look of cockney contempt. This combination at once tickled and terrified the nerves of a neurotic population. He seemed like a walking blasphemy, a blend of the angel and the ape.

At first the large stone stair seemed to Syme as deserted as a pyramid; but before he reached the top he had realized that there was a man leaning over the parapet of the Embankment and looking out across the river. As a figure he was quite conventional, clad in a silk hat and frock-coat of the more formal type of fashion; he had a red flower in his buttonhole. As Syme drew nearer to him step by step, he did not move even a hair; and Syme could come close enough to notice even in the dim, pale morning light that his face was long, pale and intel-

lectual, and ended in a small triangular tuft of dark beard at the very point of the chin, all else being clean-shaven. This scrap of hair almost seemed a mere oversight; the rest of the face was of that type that is best shaven—clear-cut, ascetic, and in its way noble. Syme drew closer and closer, noting all this, and still the figure did not stir.

At first an instinct had told Syme that this was the man whom he was meant to meet. Then, seeing that the man made no sign, he had concluded that he was not. And now again he had come back to a certainty that the man had something to do with his mad adventure. For the man remained more still than would have been natural if a stranger had come so close. He was as motionless as a wax-work, and got on the nerves somewhat in the same way. Syme looked again and again at the pale, dignified and delicate face, and the face still looked blankly across the river. Then he took out of his pocket the note from Buttons proving his election, and put it before that sad and beautiful face. Then the man smiled; and his smile was a shock, for it was all on one side, going up in the right cheek and down in the left.

One man indeed stood out at even a superficial glance. He at least was the common or garden Dynamiter. He wore, indeed, the high white collar and satin tie that were the uniform of the occasion; but out of this collar there sprang a head quite unmanageable and quite unmistakable, a bewildering bush of brown hair and beard that almost obscured the eyes like those of a Skye terrier. But the eyes did look out of the tangle and they were the sad eyes of some Russian serf. The effect of this figure was not terrible like that of the President, but it had every diablerie that can come from the utterly

grotesque. If out of that stiff tie and collar there had come abruptly the head of a cat or a dog, it could not have been a more idiotic contrast.

But as he looked at the others, he began to see in each of them exactly what he had seen in the man by the river, a demoniac detail somewhere. That lopsided laugh, which would suddenly disfigure the fine face of his original guide, was typical of all these types. Each man had something about him, perceived perhaps at the tenth or twentieth glance, which was not normal, and which seemed hardly human. The only metaphor he could think of was this, that they all looked as men of fashion and presence would look, with the additional twist given in a false and curved mirror. . . .

Each man was subtly and differently wrong. Next to him sat Tuesday, the towzle-headed Gogol, a man more obviously mad. Next was Wednesday, a certain Marquis de St. Eustache, a sufficiently characteristic figure. The first few glances found nothing unusual about him, except that he was the only man at table who wore the fashionable clothes as if they were really his own. He had a black French beard cut square, and a black English frock-coat cut even squarer. But Syme, sensitive to such things, felt somehow that the man carried a rich atmosphere with him, a rich atmosphere that suffocated. It reminded one irrationally of drowsy odors, and of dying lamps in the darker poems of Byron and Poe. With this went a sense of his being clad, not in lighter colors, but in softer materials; his black seemed richer and warmer than the black shades about him, as if it were compounded of profound color. His black coat looked as if it were only black by being too dense a purple. His black beard, looked as if it were only black

by being too dense a blue. And in the gloom and thickness of the beard his dark red mouth showed sensual and scornful. Whatever he was he was not a Frenchman; he might be a Jew; he might be something deeper yet in the dark heart of the East. In the bright coloured Persian tiles and pictures showing tyrants hunting, you may see just those almond eyes, those blue-black beards, those cruel, crimson lips.

Then came Syme, and next a very old man, Professor de Worms, who still kept the chair of Friday, though every day it was expected that his death would leave it empty. Save for his intellect, he was in the last dissolution of senile decay. His face was as grey as his long grey beard, his forehead was lifted and fixed finally in a furrow of mild despair. In no other case, not even that of Gogol, did the bridegroom brilliancy of the morning dress express a more painful contrast. For the red flower in his buttonhole showed up against a face that was literally discoloured like lead; the whole hideous effect was as if some drunken dandies had put their clothes upon a corpse. When he rose or sat down, which was with long labour and peril, something worse was expressed than mere weakness, something indefinable connected with the horror of the whole scene. It did not express decrepitude merely, but corruption. Another hateful fancy crossed Syme's quivering mind. He could not help thinking that whenever the man moved a leg or arm might fall off.

Right at the end sat the man called Saturday, the simplest and most baffling of all. He was a short, square man with a dark, square face clean-shaven, a medical practioner going by the name of Bull. He had that combination of *savoir-faire* with a sort of well-groomed coarseness which is not uncommon in young doctors. He

carried his fine clothes with confidence rather than ease, and he mostly wore a set smile. There was nothing whatever odd about him, except that he wore a pair of dark, almost opaque spectacles. It may have been merely a crescendo of nervous fancy that had gone before, but those black discs were dreadful to Syme; they reminded him of half-remembered ugly tales, of some story about pennies being put on the eyes of the dead. Syme's eye always caught the black glasses and the blind grin. Had the dying Professor worn them, or even the pale Secretary, they would have been appropriate. But on the younger and grosser man they seemed only an enigma. They took away the key of the face. You could not tell what his smile or his gravity meant. Partly from this, and partly because he had a vulgar virility wanting in most of the others, it seemed to Syme that he might be the wickedest of all those wicked men. Syme even had the thought that his eyes might be covered up because they were too frightful to see.

As Syme strode along the corridor he saw the Secretary standing at the top of a great flight of stairs. The man had never looked so noble. He was draped in a long robe of starless black, down the centre of which fell a band or broad stripe of pure white, like a single shaft of light. The whole looked like some very severe ecclesiastical vestment. There was no need for Syme to search his memory or the Bible in order to remember that the first day of creation marked the mere creation of light out of darkness. The vestment itself would alone have suggested the symbol; and Syme felt also how perfectly this pattern of pure white and black expressed the soul of the pale and austere Secretary, with his inhuman veracity and his cold frenzy, which made

him so easily make war on the anarchists and yet so easily pass for one of them. Syme was scarcely surprised to notice that, amid all the ease and hospitality of their new surroundings, this man's eyes were still stern. . . .

As they descended the broad stairs together they overtook Ratcliffe, who was clad in spring green like a huntsman, and the pattern upon whose garment was a green tangle of trees. For he stood for that third day on which the earth and green things were made, and his square, sensible face, with its not unfriendly cynicism, seemed appropriate enough to it. . . . Gogol, or Tuesday, had his simplicity well symbolised by a dress designed upon the division of the waters, a dress that separated upon his forehead and fell to his feet, grey and silver, like a sheet of rain. The Professor, whose day was that on which the birds and fishes—the ruder forms of life—were created, had a dress of dim purple, over which sprawled goggle-eyed fishes and outrageous tropical birds, the union in him of unfathomable fancy and of doubt. Dr. Bull, the last day of Creation, wore a coat covered with heraldic animals in red and gold, and on his crest a man rampant. He lay back in his chair with a broad smile, the picture of an optimist in his element.

Gilbert Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Copyright by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE GREAT SPHINX

That night I had driven from Cairo, after dining in an ultra-modern hotel, filled with all kinds of tourists bent on extravagance and luxury.

How unexpected the change, once I had left the noisy

town, to find stretching in front of me that immense shroud: the desert of Libya! . . . A road, lined with palms, afterwards with small stunted trees, and then . . . nothing more; the land converted into a vague kind of thing, with undefined contours, a sort of pink cloud, on which no footstep makes the faintest sound: sand, an eternal stretch of sand, dismal and sad-looking beneath the moon's pale beams.

After an hour's ride in the landau, I was conducted on foot in the direction of the Sphinx. On the sandy desert not a sound was audible.

Alongside of the great triangular silhouettes of the Pyramids, which were also pink-tinted like the sand in the moonlight, appeared a shapeless mass, one might have called it a rock, though it offered a dim resemblance to a seated animal: there it lay as it had done for countless ages, somewhat protected, by the thin stretch of desert, against invasion by modern man. We approached it from behind, but in this position it disappointed my expectation; it inspired no feeling of dread whatsoever, for it represented nothing at all. Only the silence of the sand was impressive; the very sound of our footsteps was here drowned as though we were treading the thick carpet of some sanctuary.

Suddenly, its face appeared, harsher and more mummified beneath the moon's cold beam; its great mysterious face, proudly poised over against the sky, and gazing upon what has been lying there for countless centuries, the wide-spreading horizon. . . .

And it smiled in disdain, that enormous face, in spite of time's ravages, which have disfigured it with the flat nose of a death's head. I sat down in front of it, as the moon traced on the sand my blue shadow; and looking up, I shamelessly fixed upon its eyes my own: the gaze of an

ephemeral pigmy. Then there came over me the feeling that it, also, was looking at me; and, by degrees, a terrible fascination stole from it, and I sat there, hypnotized by that unflinching gaze, as silent and motionless as though I were dead.

Pierre Loti, *On Life's By-Ways*. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd. Used by courtesy of the translator, Mr. Fred Rothwell.

TRIVIA

SOMEWHERE

Somewhere, far below the horizon, there is a city; some day I shall sail to find its sun-bright harbor; by what star I shall steer my vessel, or where that seaport lies, I know not, but somehow, through calm and storms and all the vague sea-noises I shall voyage, until some mountain-peak will rise at last to tell me I am near my destination; or I shall see, some day at dusk, a lighthouse twinkling at its port.

THOUGHTS

One Autumn, a number of years ago—I forget the exact date, but it was a considerable time before the War—I spent a few weeks in Venice in lodgings that looked out on an old Venetian garden. At the end of the garden there was a rustic temple, and on its pediment stood some naked, decayed, gesticulating statues—heathen gods and goddesses I vaguely thought them—and above, among the yellowing trees, I could see the belfry of a small convent—a convent of nuns vowed to contemplation, who were immured there for life, and never went outside the convent walls.

The belfry was so near that when, towards dusk, the convent bell began to ring against the sky, I could see its bell-rope and clapper moving; and sometimes, as I sat there at my window, I would think about the mysterious existence, so near me, of those life-renouncing virgins.

Very clearly it comes back to me, the look of that untidy garden, of those gesticulating statues, and of that convent bell swinging against the sky; but the thoughts that I thought about those Nuns I have completely forgotten. They were probably not of any especial interest.

Logan Pearsall Smith, *More Trivia*. Used by permission of the publishers, Harcourt, Brace & Company, and of Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith.

THE SPRING IN LONDON

London seemed last winter like an underground city; as if its low sky were the roof of a cave, and its murky day a light such as one reads of in countries beneath the earth.

And yet the natural sunlight sometimes shone there; white clouds voyaged in the blue sky; the interminable multitudes of roofs were washed with silver by the Moon, or cloaked with a mantle of new-fallen snow. And the coming of Spring to London was to me not unlike the descent of the maiden-goddess into Death's Kingdoms, where pink almond blossoms blew about her in the gloom, and those shadowy people were stirred with faint longings for meadows and the shepherd's life. Nor was there anything more virginal and fresh in wood or orchard than the shimmer of young foliage, which, in May, dimmed with delicate green all the smoke-blackened London trees.

SANCTUARIES

She said, "How small the world is after all!"

I thought of China, of a holy mountain in the West of China, full of legends and sacred trees and demon-haunted caves. It is always enveloped in mountain mists; and in that white thick air I heard the faint sound of bells, and the muffled foot-steps of innumerable pilgrims, and the reiterated mantra, *Nam-Mo, O-mi-to-Fo*, which they murmur as they climb the slopes. High up among its temples and monasteries marched processions of monks, with intoned services, and many prostrations, and lighted candles that glimmer through the fog. There in their solemn shrines stood the statues of the Arahats, and there, seated on his white elephant, loomed immense and dim, the image of Amithabha, the Lord of the Western Heavens.

She said, "Life is so complicated!"

Climbing inaccessible cliffs of rock and ice, I shut myself within a Tibetan monastery beyond the Himalayan ramparts. I join with choirs of monks, intoning their deep sonorous dirges and unintelligible prayers; I beat drums, I clash cymbals, and blow at dawn from the Lamasery roofs conchs, and loud discordant trumpets. And wandering through those vast and shadowy halls, as I tend the butter-lamps of the golden Buddhas, and watch the storms that blow across the barren mountains, I taste an imaginary bliss, and then pass on to other scenes and incarnations along the endless road that leads me to Nirvana.

"But I do wish you would tell me what you really think?"

I fled to Africa, and into the depths of the dark Ashanti forest. There, in its gloomiest recesses, where

the soil is stained with the blood of the negroes He has eaten, dwells that monstrous Deity of human shape and red colour, the great Fetish God, Sasabonsum. I like Sasabonsum; other Gods are sometimes moved to pity and forgiveness, but to Him such weakness is unknown. He is utterly and absolutely implacable; no gifts or prayers, no holocausts of human victims can appease, or ever, for one moment, propitiate Him.

THE POPLAR

There is a great tree in Sussex, whose cloud of thin foliage floats high in the summer air. The thrush sings in it, and blackbirds, who fill the late, decorative sunshine with a shimmer of golden sound. There the nightingale finds her green cloister; and on those branches sometimes, like a great fruit, hangs the lemon-coloured Moon. In the glare of August, when all the world is faint with heat, there is always a breeze in those cool recesses, always a noise, like the noise of water, among its lightly hung leaves.

But the owner of this Tree lives in London, reading books.

FROM AN UMBRELLA

From under the roof of my umbrella I saw the washed pavement lapsing beneath my feet, the news-posters lying smeared with dirt at the crossings, the tracks of the busses in the liquid mud. On I went through this dreary world of wetness. And through how many rains and years shall I still hurry down wet streets—middle-aged, and then, perhaps, very old? And on what errands?

Asking myself these cheerless questions, I fade from

your vision, Reader, into the distance, sloping my umbrella against the wind.

From *Trivia*, by Logan Pearsall Smith. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co. By permission of the publishers.

THE SHRINE OF MNEMOSYNE

The little town of Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, in a mid-winter mist, flat and charming like a Japanese print. . . . San Francisco and the Golden Gate from the top of Twin Peaks. . . . Gibraltar on a Spring day, all in pastel shades, like the back-drop for a musical comedy. . . . My first view of the tropics, the palm-trees suddenly bulging out of the darkness of dawn, the tremendous stillness, the sweetly acid smell, the immeasurable strangeness. . . . The Trentino on a glorious morning, up from Verona to the Brennen Pass. . . . Central Germany from Brennen to Munich, all in one day, with the apple trees in bloom. . . . Copenhagen on a wild night, with the *Polizei* combing the town for the American who upset the piano. . . . Christiania in January, with the snow-clad statue of Ibsen looming through the gloom like a ghost in the cellar. . . . The beach at Tybee Island, with the faint, blood-curdling rattle of the land-crabs. . . . Jacksonville after the fire in 1902, with the hick militiamen firing their machine-guns all night. . . . The first inauguration of Woodrow, and the pretty suffragette who drank beer with me at the Raleigh. . . . A child playing in the yard of a God-forsaken town in the Wyoming desert. . . . Bryan's farewell speech at the St. Louis Convention in 1904. . . . Hampton Court on Chestnut Sunday. . . . A New Year's Eve party on a Danish ship, 500 miles off the coast of Greenland. . . . The little pile of stones on the beach of Watling's Island,

marking the place where Columbus landed. . . . The moon of the Caribbees, seen from a 1000-ton British tramp. . . . A dull night in a Buffalo hotel, reading the American Revised Version of the New Testament. . . . The day I received the proofs of my first book. . . . A good-bye on an Hoboken pier. . . . The Palace Hotel in Madrid.

H. L. Mencken, *Prejudices: Fourth Series*. By permission of the author and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

CHAPTER VIII

Cumulative Description

Exactly opposite both in method and effect to impressionistic description is cumulative description. The one seeks simplification; the other delights in multiplicity; one prunes, the other embroiders; one finds all eternity in a single flower; the other seeks infinity in a universe of flowers. One is as natural a point of view as the other; both have their roots in the attempt of man to express the universe in which he lives. We have seen that simplicity was one of the cardinal principles of classic art, and that, in the modern recrudescence of something which suggests the classical spirit, a single mood, a gesture, a word may take on vast significance. But, if we approach our problem for a moment from another point of view, we may find ourselves objecting to the Greek principle of simplicity and saying something to this effect: "Life is *not* simple; it is usually a most complex affair. It is not true that the more one knows of a thing, the simpler it becomes; the more one knows of most things, the more complex they are seen to be." Most of the Greeks—not all, for Plato is one of the outstanding exceptions—saw life in a "white light"; they looked directly at the object and saw it as it was, without falsification, without sentiment; but—at least from one point of view—we feel that in so doing, they missed shade and *nuance*. It was a clear light; it was also a cold one.

What the difference is, we may see by comparing al-

most any classic Greek drama with almost any Elizabethan play destined for the popular theatre—most of Shakespeare, that is, Kyd, Marlowe. Every dramatic principle of the Greeks made for simplification: the “three unities” demanded one plot, one place, a limited period of time; the Greeks distinguished sharply between comedy and tragedy—they allowed no such scenes as that of the drunken porter in *Macbeth*, or the colossal hoax of Falstaff with the body of Hotspur; they insisted upon “purity” in the sense that they allowed no bloodshed on the stage; their actors were limited to three (exclusive of the chorus), with a consequent limitation of the number of characters which could be presented. Compare with these the unwritten theories of Shakespeare in regard to drama, and it will not be difficult to see why Voltaire, classicist that he was, called Shakespeare the “great barbarian.” Seldom does Shakespeare preserve any of the unities; he moves with celerity from England to Italy, from the “sea-coast of Bohemia” to the mysterious island in *The Tempest*, from the birth of a child to her marriage,

here and there, jumping o’er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass.

He mingles in one play many moods: in a moment we turn from mourning the dead Hotspur to the last jest of the irrepressible Falstaff; he delighted in bloodshed and scenes of horror on the stage, as witness the last act of *Hamlet*,—to say nothing of *Titus Andronicus*, if that indeed was his play; he adds character after character, until we are almost overwhelmed, as we are with Dickens; and, never content with one plot, he heaps up in one play, with the prodigality of Nature herself, three, four, five

plots, from any one of which he might have made a play; there could not be too many jokes, too many episodes, too much entertainment for Shakespeare or for his audiences.

It is absurd, of course, to think—as pseudo-classicists once did—that Shakespeare did this unconsciously or because he knew no better. There have been few craftsmen as conscious of their methods and their effects; and that he “knew better” anyone who knows Ben Jonson will be sure! The fact of the matter is that Shakespeare complicated his plots because his audiences liked complication; he could have made his plays more simple, but they would not have been *his* plays. One may feel in them—if one wishes to interpret them so—the excitement of his day, the confusion, the teeming interest, of the “spacious times of great Elizabeth.” Whatever reason we may give for it, we must agree that Shakespeare delighted in complication. That is not to say that he does not have his moments of great simplicity, but that in the structure of his plays, as in the language of his poetry, and in his imagination, he is prodigal to a degree, piling words upon words until he seems to cry to the imaginations of other playwrights, as Hamlet cried to Laertes:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart.

There are, as there will always be, two types of men—or, better, two moods in men: one which naturally loves simplicity and finds it everywhere; another which naturally loves complexity, and whose joy consists in reducing chaos to order, to be sure—for that all artists do—but in feeling still that chaos is there. A Corinthian pil-

lar does not better support the temple than does a Doric or an Ionic; the decoration is unnecessary and its charm lies in the fact that it is unnecessary, that it serves no utilitarian purpose. Fine linen or silk needs no embroidery, yet there is an undeniable delight in embroidering fine materials or in making laces, which exist for no other reason than to beautify. The goblet which Benvenuto Cellini made for the Cardinal did not hold more wine because of its exquisite tracery; the shield of Achilles was not a better protection in war because of the intricate tales which the crafty smith had engraved upon it. There is a place in art, as in life, for the ornate, the decorative, the complex. No English writer so thoroughly exemplifies the delight of an artist in the ornate style as does Sir Thomas Browne; and the student who wishes to see a truly "cumulative style"—even though not a technically "descriptive" style—at its finest will do well to read *Hydriotaphia* and *The Garden of Cyrus*. Lytton Strachey has written with great penetration upon just this aspect of Browne's style. He says, in part: ¹

The state of mind which he wished to produce in his readers was nearly always a complicated one; they were to be impressed and elevated by a multiplicity of suggestions and a sense of mystery and awe. "Let thy thought," he says himself, "be of things which have not entered into the hearts of beasts: think of things long past, and long to come; acquaint thyself with the choragium of the stars, and consider the vast expanse beyond them. Let intellectual tubes give thee a glance of things which visive organs reach not. Have a glimpse of incomprehensibles, and thoughts of things, which thoughts but tenderly touch.

There are, then, writers who deal in cumulative description because they feel the world as complex, and they delight in that complexity. But all descriptive ar-

¹"Sir Thomas Browne" in *Books and Characters*. Harcourt, Brace & Company.

tists find themselves, occasionally, at least, faced with a scene, an event, a person, which cannot be described simply, because it is not simple. We cannot find a better example than such an every-day sight as a sunrise or sunset. Seen casually, as most of us see it, it is a simple thing, a mere shading from one color to another. Turn and read a description of a sunrise as Ruskin or Hearn saw it, and notice the vast number of gradations which go to make up the whole impression. Ruskin is probably the best English writer to study if one wishes to learn to observe the thousand details to be found in any object. Whether we agree with his general conclusions or not, we will not find a better guide book to European cathedrals and churches than his works; if we turn to Ruskin after we think we have "seen" a cathedral, we become increasingly aware that we have eyes but see not! Stand with Ruskin beside the Falls of Schaffhausen and observe the myriad details you would not observe if you stood there alone; distinguish with him the varieties of moss and lichens which formerly seemed to you all of one sort. Like the botanist, Ruskin will show you that the dandelion which you have always considered a simple flower, is in reality a group of complexities.

Masefield's *Cargoes* is a masterpiece of cumulative description in brief space. Not only is each stanza a picture; each represents an epoch. This poem illustrates well the value of *selection* among cumulative details. Much may be said in little, yet the impression may still be of multiplicity. The nouns, *quinquireme*, *galleon*, *coaster*; the verbs, *rowing*, *dipping*, *butting*; the adjectives, *distant*, *sunny*, *stately*, *salt-caked*, *mad*; the particular articles chosen to represent the cargoes—all these have been selected by Masefield with scrupulous care. The generations which have passed between the pictures,

and the civilization of which each is a symbol, have been implied rather than expressed, by the trick of grouping details effectively.

The cumulative method is the logical one for describing great disturbances among men: wars, riots, fires, with attendant panic; in general, it is the method which best suits occasions of rejoicing or of abandon; crowds of people hurrying together to celebrate a victory, processions, fairs; and it is used again and again to picture places where people congregate in large groups—churches and market-places, stations, city squares. It marks the culmination of descriptive technique, including as it does all other kinds of description; before the writer can hope to deal with the large canvas of cumulative description, he must know how to picture places, both buildings and localities, since these are to be the background of his scene; he must be able to delineate all sorts of characters, and, particularly, he must be able to give sudden swift impressions in the fewest words; it is almost needless to say that he must understand point of view. The use of multiplicity of details, more than any other kind of description, demands unity; unless there is some common center, the reader will feel nothing but confusion.

Sometimes the necessary unity may be secured by the order in which the details are introduced. There is, for example, the order of observation, such as is seen in Lew Wallace's *Passing of the Caravans*, in which, although the whole effect is confusion, the details are presented in strict order. Again, details may be arranged according to contiguity, or their relation in space, where one object appears next to another, sometimes intensifying that other, sometimes contrasting with it. So Donn Byrne's hero describes the groups of trade guilds as they appear before him. There is also the chronological order:

Lafcadio Hearn's description of a storm begins before its sudden rise, follows it through to its climax, then watches it die away, leaving ruin and disaster behind it. The use of a "fundamental image"—the comparative point of view—such as appears in Hugo's description of the battlefields of Waterloo or in Wordsworth's account of the English Lake Country, has already been discussed. Last, and often best of all, is the order of climax, in which the author gathers up his details from the simplest or the least important, leading always to the central figure which gives them their significance. A magnificent example of that may be found in Ruskin's description of the interior of St. Mark's, when all his details take on a new significance as we realize that "the mazes of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the Cross, lifted and carved in every place, and upon every stone."

The method of cumulative description will depend, of course, upon the scene which the author is describing. Often, in attempting to picture a city, we will start from the general impression which it gives us at first glance, and proceed then to analyze it into its parts; such was the method of Victor Hugo as he looked at Paris from the top of Notre Dame. At other times, however, we may gain an impression of the spirit of a city by walking along a street, as did Simeon Strunsky and Robert Cortes Holliday, interpreting as we go, leaving the synthesis for the last. In some descriptions we may proceed from the physical to the mental, gaining our impressions gradually through various senses; thus Stevenson in his "Night Among the Pines" hears, sees, feels, and from all these concludes; but in another situation we may be so dazed or deafened by noise, or blinded by light, that our first reaction is of confusion and even mental bewilderment,

and only after some time are we able to distinguish the phenomena which produced the impression. The most natural method of observation, for eye, and ear, and mind, proceeds from the near to the remote; but there may be situations in which we strain our eyes toward the horizon so intently that we may fail to notice for the time things near at hand, as "Sister Anna" no doubt looked not in the court yard but far away for the coming of Bluebeard!

CUMULATIVE DESCRIPTION

THE STORM

It was a murky confusion—here and there blotted with a colour like the colour of the smoke from damp fuel—of flying clouds tossed up into most remarkable heaps,—suggesting greater heights in the clouds than there were depths below them to the bottom of the deepest hollows in the earth, through which the wild moon seemed to plunge headlong, as if, in a dread disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way and were frightened. There had been a wind all day; and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound. In another hour it had much increased, and the sky was more overcast, and blew hard.

But as the night advanced, the clouds closing in and densely overspreading the whole sky, then very dark, it came on to blow, harder and harder. It still increased until our horses could scarcely face the wind. Many times, in the dark part of the night (it was then late in September, when the nights were not short), the leaders turned about or came to a dead stop; and we were often in serious apprehension that the coach would be blown over. Sweeping gusts of rain came up before this storm, like showers of steel; and, at those times, when there was

any shelter of trees or lee walls to be got, we were fain to stop, in a sheer impossibility of continuing the struggle.

When the day broke, it blew harder and harder. I had been in Yarmouth when the seamen said it blew great guns, but I had never known the like of this, or anything approaching to it. We came to Ipswich—very late, having had to fight every inch of ground since we were ten miles out of London; and found a cluster of people in the market-place, who had risen from their beds in the night, fearful of falling chimneys. Some of them, congregating about the inn-yard while we changed horses, told us of great sheets of lead having been ripped off a high church-tower, and flung into a by-street, which they then blocked up. Others had to tell of country people, coming in from neighboring villages, who had seen great trees lying torn out of the earth, and whole ricks scattered about the roads and fields. Still, there was no abatement in the storm, but it blew harder.

As we struggled on, nearer and nearer to the sea, from which the mighty wind was blowing dead on shore, its force became more and more terrific. Long before we saw the sea, its spray was on our lips, and showered salt rain upon us. The water was out, over miles and miles of the flat country adjacent to Yarmouth; and every sheet and puddle lashed its banks, and had its stress of little breakers setting heavily toward us. When we came within sight of the sea, the waves on the horizon, caught at intervals above the rolling abyss, were like glimpses of another shore with towers and buildings. When at last we got into the town, the people came out to their doors, all aslant, and with streaming hair, making a wonder of the mail that had come through such a night.

I put up at the old inn, and went down to look at the sea; staggering along the street, which was strewn with

sand and seaweed, and with flying blotches of sea-foam; afraid of falling slates and tiles; and holding by people I met, at angry corners. Coming near the beach I saw, not only the boatmen, but half the people of the town, lurking behind buildings; some, now and then braving the fury of the storm to look away to sea, and blown sheer out of their course in trying to get zigzag back.

Joining these groups, I found bewailing women whose husbands were away in herring or oyster boats, which there was too much reason to think might have foundered before they could run in anywhere for safety. Grizzled old sailors were among the people, shaking their heads, as they looked from water to sky, and muttering to one another; ship-owners, excited and uneasy; children, huddling together, and peering into older faces; even stout marines, disturbed and anxious, levelling their glasses at the sea from behind places of shelter, as if they were surveying an enemy.

The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills; masses of water shivered

and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell; the clouds fell fast and thick; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*.

THE HURRICANE

—"Waltzing!" cried the Captain. "God help them! —God help' us all now! . . . *The Wind waltzes to-night, with the Sea for his partner! . . .*"

O the stupendous Valse-Tourbillon! O the mighty Dancer! One-two-three! From northeast to east, from east to southeast, from southeast to south: then from the south he came, whirling the Sea in his arms. . . .

Someone shrieked in the midst of the revels;—some girl who found her pretty slippers wet. What could it be? Thin streams of water were spreading over the level planking,—curling about the feet of the dancers. . . . What could it be? All the land had begun to quake, even as, but a moment before, the polished floor was trembling to the pressure of the circling steps;—all the building shook now; every beam uttered its groan. What could it be? . . .

There was a clamor, a panic, a rush to the windy night. Infinite darkness above and beyond; but the lantern-beams danced far out over an unbroken circle of heaving and swirling black water. Stealthily, swiftly, the measureless sea-flood was rising. . . .

For a moment there was a ghastly hush of voices. And through that hush there burst upon the ears of all a fearful and unfamiliar sound, as of a colossal cannonade

—rolling up from the south, with volleying lightnings. Vastly and swiftly, nearer and nearer it came,—a ponderous and unbroken thunder-roll, terrible as the long mutterings of an earthquake. . . .

Then rose a frightful cry,—the hoarse, hideous, indescribable cry of hopeless fear,—the despairing animal-cry man utters when suddenly brought face to face with Nothingness, without preparation, without consolation, without possibility of respite. . . . *Sauve qui peut!* Some wrenched down the doors; some clung to the heavy banquet-tables, to the sofas, to the billiard-tables:—during one terrible instant,—against fruitless heroisms, against futile generosity,—raged all the frenzy of selfishness, all the brutalities of panic. And then—then came, thundering through the blackness, the giant swells, boom on boom! . . . One crash!—the huge frame rocks like a cradle, seesaws, crackles. What are human shrieks now?—the tornado is shrieking! Another!—chandeliers splinter; lights are dashed out; a sweeping cataract hurls in: the immense hall rises,—oscillates,—twirls as upon a pivot,—crepitates,—crumbles into ruin. Crash again!—the swirling wreck dissolves into the wallowing of another monster billow; and a hundred cottages overturn, spin in sudden eddies, quiver, disjoint, and melt into the seething.

. . . So the hurricane passed,—tearing off the heads of the prodigious waves, to hurl them a hundred feet in air,—heaping up the ocean against the land,—upturning the woods. Bays and passes were swollen to abysses; rivers regorged; the sea-marshes were changed to raging wastes of water. Before New Orleans the flood of the mile broad Mississippi rose six feet above highest water-mark. One hundred and ten miles away, Donaldsonville trembled at the towering tide of the Lafourche. Lakes

strove to burst their boundaries. Far-off river steamers tugged wildly at their cables,—shivering like tethered creatures that hear by night the approaching howl of destroyers. Smoke-stacks were hurled overboard, pilot-houses torn away, cabins blown to fragments.

And over roaring Kaimbuck Pass,—over the agony of Caillou Bay,—the billowing tide rushed unresisted from the Gulf,—tearing and swallowing the land in its course,—ploughing out deep-sea channels where sleek herds had been grazing but a few hours before,—rending islands in twain,—and ever bearing with it, through the night, enormous vortex of wreck and vast wan drift of corpses. . . .

Lafcadio Hearn, *Chita*. By permission of
Harper & Brothers.

THE FEAST OF SAN GIOVANNI

It was fitting that the day of San Giovanni—that ancient Church festival already venerable in the days of St. Augustine—should be a day of peculiar rejoicing to Florence, and should be ushered in by a vigil duly kept in strict old Florentine fashion, with much dancing, with much street jesting, and perhaps with not a little stone-throwing and window-breaking, but emphatically with certain street sights such as could only be provided by a city which held in its service a clever Cecca, engineer and architect, valuable alike in sieges and in shows. By the help of Cecca, the very saints, surrounded with their almond-shaped glory, and floating on clouds with their joyous companionship of winged cherubs, even as they may be seen to this day in the pictures of Perugino, seemed, on the eve of San Giovanni, to have brought their piece of the heavens down into the narrow streets,

and to pass slowly through them; and, more wonderful still, saints of gigantic size, with attendant angels, might be seen, not seated, but moving in a slow mysterious manner along the streets, like a procession of colossal figures come down from the high domes and tribunes of the churches. The clouds were made of good woven stuff, and saints and cherubs were unglorified mortals supported by firm bars, and those mysterious giants were really men of very steady brain, balancing themselves on stilts, and enlarged, like Greek tragedians, by huge masks and stuffed shoulders; but he was a miserably unimaginative Florentine who thought only of that,—nay, somewhat impious, for in the images of sacred things was there not some of the virtue of sacred things themselves? And if, after that, there came a company of merry black demons well-armed with claws and thongs, and other implements of sport, ready to perform impromptu farces of bastinadoing and clothes-tearing, why, that was the demons' way of keeping a vigil, and they, too, might have descended from the domes and the tribunes. . . .

And Midsummer morning, in this year 1492, was not less bright than usual. It was betimes in the morning that the symbolic offerings to be carried in grand procession were all assembled at their starting-point in the Piazza della Signoria,—that famous Piazza, where stood then, and stand now, the massive turreted Palace of the People, called the Palazzo Vecchio, and the spacious Loggia, built by Orcagna,—the scene of all grand State ceremonial. The sky made the fairest blue tent, and under it the bells swung so vigorously that every evil spirit with sense enough to be formidable must long since have taken his flight; windows and terraced roofs were alive with human faces; sombre stone houses were bright

with hanging draperies; the boldly soaring palace tower, the yet older square tower of the Bargello, and the spire of the neighboring Badia seemed to keep watch above; and below, on the broad polygonal flags of the piazza, was the glorious show of banners and horses with rich trappings, and gigantic *ceri*, or tapers, that were fitly called towers,—strangely aggrandized descendants of those torches by whose faint light the church worshipped in the catacombs. Betimes in the morning all processions had need to move under the Midsummer sky of Florence, where the shelter of the narrow streets must every now and then be exchanged for the glare of wide spaces; and the sun would be high up in the heavens before the long pomp had ended its pilgrimage in the Piazza di San Giovanni.

But here, where the procession was to pause, the magnificent city, with its ingenious Cecca, had provided another tent than the sky; for the whole of the Piazza del Duomo, from the octagonal baptistery in the centre to the façade of the cathedral and the walls of the houses on the other sides of the quadrangle, was covered, at the height of forty feet or more, with blue drapery, adorned with well-stitched yellow lilies and the familiar coats of arms, while sheaves of many-colored banners dropped at fit angles under this superincumbent blue,—a gorgeous rainbow-lit shelter to the waiting spectators, who leaned from the windows, and made a narrow border on the pavement, and wished for the coming of the show.

George Eliot, *Romola*.

THE PROCESSION OF THE TRADEGUILDS

The processions of the tradespeople were like a king's retinue, and they marching in state on the election of a

doge. Each in their separate order they'd come, the master smiths first, every one garlanded like a conqueror, with their banner and their buglers. The furriers next in ermine and taffeta; the tanners, with silver cups filled with wine; the tailors in white, with vermilion stars; the wool-workers, with olive branches; the quilt-makers in cloaks trimmed with fleur-de-lis; the cloth-of-gold weavers, with golden crowns set with pearls; the shoe-makers in fine silk, while the silk-workers were in fustian; the cheese-dealers and pork-butchers in scarlet and purple; the fish-mongers and poulterers, armed like men-of-war; the glass-makers, with elegant specimens of their art; the comb-makers, with little birds in cages; the barber-surgeons on horseback, very dignified, very learned, and with that you'd think there'd be an end to them, but cast your eye back on that procession and you'd find guilds as far as your sight would reach. . . .

Let you be going down the markets, and what would you see for sale? Boots, clothes, bread? No, they were out of sight; but scattered on the booths, the like of farls of bread on a fair-day, you'd find cloves and nutmegs, mace and ebony from Moluccas, that had come by way of Alexandria and the Syrian ports; sandalwood from Timor, in Asia; camphor from Borneo. Sumatra and Java sent benzoin to her markets. Cochin China sent bitter aloeswood. From China and Japan and from Siam came gum, spices, silks, chessmen, and curiosities for the parlor. Rubies from Peru, fine cloths from Coromandel, and finer still from Bengal. They got spikenard from Nepaul and Bhutan. Their diamonds were from Golconda. From Nirmul they purchased Damascus steel for their swords. Nor is that all you'd see, and you'd be going down by the markets on a sunny morning, and a fine-thinking, low-voiced woman on your arm. You'd see

pearls and sapphires, topaz and cinnamon from Ceylon; lac and agates, brocades and coral from Cambay; hammered vessels and inlaid weapons and embroidered shawls from Cashmere. As for spices, never would your nostrils meet such an odor: bdellium from Scinde, musk from Tibet, galbanum from Khorasan; from Afghanistan, asafetida; from Persia, sagapenum; ambergris and civet from Zanzibar, and from Zanzibar came ivory, too. And from Zeila, Berbera, and Shehri came balsam and frankincense. . . .

And that was Venice, and Marco Polo a young man.

Donn Byrne, *Messer Marco Polo*. By permission of The Century Co.

DOWN THE THAMES

To run down the Thames is to run one's hand over the pages in the book of England from end to end. One begins in Craven Reach and it is as if one were in the heart of Old England. Behind us are Kew and Hampton Court with their memories of Kings and Cardinals, and one runs at first between Fulham's episcopal garden parties and Hurlingham's playground for the sporting instinct of our race. The whole effect is English. There is space, there are old trees and all the best qualities of the home-land in that upper reach. Putney, too, looks Anglican on a dwindling scale. And then for a stretch the newer developments slop over, one misses Blades-over and there come first squalid stretches of mean homes right and left and then the dingy industrialism of the south side, and on the north bank the polite long front of nice houses, artistic, literary, administrative people's residences, that stretches from Cheyne Walk nearly to Westminster and hides a wilderness of slums. What a

long slow crescendo this is, mile after mile, with the houses crowding closer, the multiplying succession of church towers, the architectural moments, the successive bridges, until you come out into the second movement of the piece with Lambeth's old palace under your quarter and the houses of Parliament on your bow! Westminster Bridge is ahead of you then, and through it you flash, and in a moment the round-faced clock-tower cranes up to peer at you again and New Scotland Yard squares at you, a fat beef-eater of a policeman disguised miraculously as a Bastille.

For a stretch you have the essential London; you have Charing Cross railway station, heart of the world, and the Embankment on the north side with its new hotels overshadowing its Georgian and Victorian architecture, and mud and great warehouses and factories, chimneys, shot towers, advertisements on the south. The northward skyline grows more intricate and pleasing, and more and more does one thank God for Wren. Somerset House is as picturesque as the Civil War, one is reminded again of the original England, one feels in the fretted sky the quality of the Restoration lace. . . .

Through that central essential London reach I drove, and X2 bore her nose under the foam regardless of it all like a black hound going through reeds—on what trail even I who made her cannot tell.

And in this reach, too, one first meets the seagulls and is reminded of the sea. Blackfriars one takes—just under these two bridges and just between them is the finest bridge moment in the world—and behold, soaring up, hanging in the sky over a rude tumult of warehouses, over a jostling competition of traders, irrelevantly beautiful and altogether remote, Saint Paul's! "Of course!" one says, "Saint Paul's!" It is the very figure of what-

ever fineness the old Anglican culture achieved, detached, a more dignified and chastened Saint Peter's, colder, greyer, but still ornate; it has never been overthrown, never disavowed, only the tall warehouses and all the roar of traffic have forgotten it, every one has forgotten it; the steamships, the barges, go heedlessly by regardless of it, intricacies of telephone wires and poles cut blackly into its thin mysteries, and presently, when in a moment the traffic permits you and you look round for it, it has dissolved like a cloud into the grey blues of the London sky.

And then the traditional and ostensible England falls from you altogether. The third movement begins, the last great movement of the London symphony, in which the trim scheme of the old order is altogether dwarfed and swallowed up. Comes London Bridge, and the great warehouses tower up about you, waving stupendous cranes, the gulls circle and scream in your ears, large ships lie among their lighters, and one is in the port of the world. Again and again in this book I have written of England as a feudal system overtaken by fatty degeneration and stupendous accidents of hypertrophy. For the last time I must strike that note as the memory of the dear neat little sunlit ancient Tower of London lying away in a gap among the warehouses comes back to me, that little accumulation of buildings so provincially pleasant and dignified, overshadowed by the vulgarest, most typical exploit of modern England, the sham Gothic casings to the iron work of the Tower Bridge. That Tower Bridge is the very balance and confirmation of Westminster's dull pinnacles and tower. That sham Gothic bridge in the very gates of our mother of chance, the Sea!

But after that one is in a world of accident and nature.

For the third part of the panorama of London is beyond all law, order, and precedence; it is the seaport and the sea. One goes down the widening reaches through a monstrous variety of shipping, great steamers, great sailing-ships trailing the flags of all the world, a monstrous confusion of lighters, witches' conferences of brown-sailed barges, wallowing tugs, a tumultuous crowding and jostling of cranes and spars, and wharves and stores, and assertive inscriptions. Huge vistas of dock open right and left of one, and here and there beyond and amidst it all are church towers, little patches of indescribably old-fashioned and worn-out houses, riverside pubs and the like, vestiges of townships that were long since torn to fragments and submerged in these new growths. And amidst it all no plan appears, no intention, no comprehensive desire. That is the very key to it all. Every day one feels that the pressure of commerce and traffic grew, grew insensibly monstrous, and first this man made a wharf and that erected a crane, and then this company set to work and then that, and so they jostled together to make this unassimilable enormity of traffic. Through it we dodged and drove, eager for the high seas.

I remember how I laughed aloud at the glimpse of the name of a London County Council steamboat that ran across me. *Caxton* it was called, and another was *Pepys*, and another was *Shakespeare*. They seemed so wildly out of place, splashing about in that confusion. One wanted to take them out and wipe them and put them back in some English gentleman's library. Everything was alive about them, flashing, splashing, and passing, ships moving, tugs panting, hawsers taut, barges going down with men toiling at the sweeps, the water all a-swirl with the wash of shipping, scaling into millions of little wavelets, curling, and frothing under the whip of the un-

ceasing wind. Past it all we drove. And at Greenwich to the south, you know, there stands a fine stone frontage where all the victories are recorded in a Painted Hall, and beside it is the "Ship" where once upon a time those gentlemen of Westminster used to have an annual dinner—before the port of London got too much for them altogether. The old façade of the Hospital was just warming to the sunset as we went by, and after that, right and left, the river opened, the sense of the sea increased and prevailed, reach after reach from Northfleet to the Nore.

And out you come at last with the sun behind you into the eastern sea. You speed up and tear the oily water louder and faster, siroo, siroo—swish—siroo, and the hills of Kent . . . fall away on the right hand and Essex on the left. They fall away and vanish into blue haze, and the tall slow ships behind the tugs, scarce moving ships and wallowing sturdy tugs, are all wrought of wet gold as one goes frothing by. They stand out, bound on strange missions of life and death, to the killing of men in unfamiliar lands. And now behind us is blue mystery and the phantom flash of unseen lights, and presently even these are gone, and I and my destroyer tear out to the unknown across a great grey space. We tear into the great spaces of the future and the turbines fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues. Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass—pass. The river passes—London passes, England passes. . . .

H. G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duffield and Company.

NAPLES

Red tiles, yellow stucco, layer on layer of windows, roofs, and balconies, Naples pushes up the hill away from the curving bay. A red, half-closed eye, Vesuvius watches and waits. All Naples prates of this and that, and runs about its little business, shouting, bawling, incessantly calling its wares. Fish frying, macaroni drying, seven feet piles of red and white brocoli, grapes heaped high with rosemary, sliced pomegranates dripping seeds, plucked and bleeding chickens, figs on spits, lemons in baskets, melons cut and quartered nicely. "*Ah, che bella cosa!*" They even sell water, clear crystal water, for a *paul* or two. And everything done to a hullabaloo. They jabber over cheese, they chatter over wine, they gabble at the corners in the bright sunshine. And piercing through the noise is the beggar-whine, always like an undertone, the beggar-whine; and always the crimson watching eye of Vesuvius.

Amy Lowell, *Can Grande's Castle*. By permission of and by special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

CONSTANTINOPLE

Water, camels, sand, then broader water, boats, a little station, with a veiled woman standing in the doorway; then more water and sandy grass, a few trees, then waste land, a long line of bullocks plowing; then, between the railway and the water, a cluster of colored houses, mostly of wood; then trees, more waste land, a little bay, with hills beyond; then fields, more clusters of mean houses, plowed land and water; at last, the wall, with its gaps and towers; a graveyard, gardens; then, between roofs

and walls, the long curve of Constantinople. A dense smell, dogs, houses; then an actual sea-shore, with men wading bare-legged in the water, and boats coming in laden with melons; then streets of houses, with fragments of turreted walls, two birds on every turret; side-streets cutting deeply between two lines of low red roofs; faces of many colors, strange clothes; then, over the roofs, but close, the water, houses, domes, minarets of the city, in a flash, veiled suddenly by the walls of the station fastened about one.

The streets of Stamboul climb and zigzag; to walk in them is to crawl like a maggot in rotting cheese. A tram runs along one winding road, distracting it with a little civilization. Away from the tram-line, and even along a part of it, Stamboul is Eastern; the Thousand and One Nights are not yet over. The Bazaar lies in its midst, a centre of leisurely and vehement life; around the Bazaar there are streets of shops, in which men live and work according to their trades; I remember best the street of the shoemakers and the street of the workers in iron. Markets spread outwards and downwards, and, level with the quays, there are more populous streets of shops, in which men make wooden and iron things for the ships, and clothes for those who come and go in the ships; and there is always a quayside bustle, smell and filth; fierce men shouldering along, and sore dogs and men with red scarves round their heads, sitting on stools smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee out of tiny cups. Through openings between the sheds and houses, you can see ships being loaded, mended, and painted; caiques wait to take passengers across, and the passengers sit in the caiques with umbrellas over their heads.

. . . Beyond the water, low hills rise curved; dark cypresses climb the hillside in rigid lines; near the shore,

rising out of trees, are the small white dome, and the two minarets of the mosque. The streets are broad, well-paved, with none of the dirt and slime of Constantinople; on each side of the street are shops in which beads and rosaries are sold, and you see for once, really appetizing pancakes being made, clean bread and clean fruit being sold. Men sit gravely in the cafés and at the doors of the shops; there is no noise, no bustle; every eye turns on you, without approval, but, as you walk quietly through their midst, without open hostility. The walls around the mosques are pierced by barred windows, through which you see bushy trees, and one huge plane-tree, gaping as if from a wound. As I passed, the outer doorway was being re-painted, and the black lettering above it was being carefully brightened. The inner court, through which men and women were passing, was well swept; there was none of the dust which lies thick about so many of the mosques; I caught a glimpse of the doorway into the mosque itself; the unadorned white marble was spotlessly white. But a little way beyond the mosque, a winding path begins uphill among the tombs, a kind of stairway with well-swept stairs, between the tombstones; around many of them are iron rails, freshly painted; even the tombs of women, with their flower-topped heads, are sometimes railed round. From the hill-top you look down on the Sweet Waters of Europe, a placid lagoon, with its dim water and pale islands of grasses and barren shores. . . .

If you stand in the courtyard of the Suleimanie, just before the hour of prayer (you have but to turn, and you can see the water, Galata, and Scutari, in exquisite fragments), you will see men coming in one by one, and going up to the washing-place against the wall. They take off their coats and shoes, stand on the narrow foot-

hold of stone in front of the tap, and wash hands and feet and head. The carter has tied his horse to a tree; the soldiers stroll in barefoot in their shoes; the many fez shine vividly against the straight white wall. The muezzins are waiting on the minarets; they lean over their balconies; then voice after voice, in the wailing Eastern tone, cries the salutation, one voice striking through another. They move round their balconies, crying to north and south and east and west. The men go in slowly at all the doors, pushing aside the heavy curtain.

Arthur Symons, "Constantinople" in *The Graphic*, London, October 19, 1918. By permission of the editor.

BROAD STREET STATION

Broad Street Station is to me a place of extraordinary fascination. Among the cloudy memories of early childhood it stands solidly, a home of thunders and shouting, of gigantic engines with their fiery droppings of coal and sudden jets of steam. It was a place in which a delighted sense of adventure was closely mixed with fear. I remember being towed along, as a very small urchin, among throngs of hasty feet and past the prodigious glamour of those huge wheels and pistons. (Juvenile eyes are very close to the ground.) Then, arrived within, the ramping horses carved opposite the head of the stairs and the great map on the northern wall were a glorious excitement to my wondering gaze. Nowadays, when I ramble about the station its enchantment is enhanced by the recollection of those early adventures. And as most people, when passing through a station are severely intent upon their own problems and little conscious of scrutiny, it is the best of places to study the great human show. Mr. Joseph Pennell, in a thrilling drawing, has given a

perfect record of Broad street's lights and tones that linger in the eye—the hurdling network of girders, the pattering files of passengers, the upward eddies of smoke.

A sense of baffling excitement and motion keeps the mind alert as one wanders about the station. In the dim, dusky twilight of the trainshed this is all the more impressive. A gray-silver haze hangs in the great arches. Against the brightness of the western opening the locomotives come gliding in with a restful relaxation of effort, black indistinguishable profiles. The locomotives are the only restful things in the scene—they and the red-capped porters, who have the priestly dignity of oracles who have laid aside all earthly passions. Most of the human elements wear the gestures of eagerness, struggle, and perplexity. The Main Line commuters, it is true, seem to stroll trainward like a breed apart, with an air of leisurely conquest and assurance. They have the bearing of veterans who have conquered the devils of transportation and hold them in leash. But this superb carelessness is only factitious. Some day their time will come and they will fall like the rest of us. They will career frantically to and fro, dash to information desk and train bulletin, rummage for tickets, and wipe a beaded brow. What gesture, incidentally, is so significantly human as that of mopping the forehead? If I were a sculptor at work on a symbolic statue of Man, I would carve him with troubled and vacant eyes, dehydrating his brow with a handkerchief.

Take your stand by the train gate a few moments before the departure of the New York express. What a medley of types, and what a common touch of anxiety and wistfulness makes them kin. Two ladies are bidding each other a prolonged farewell. "Now, remember, 7 Howland street, Cambridge," says the departer. "Be

sure to write!" A feverish man rushes back from the train, having forgotten something, and fights his way against the line which is filing through the gate. Another man hunts dismally through all his pockets for his ticket, rocking gently and thoughtfully on his heels. The ticket seems to have vanished. He pushes his hat back on his forehead and says something to the collector. This new posture of his hat seems to aid him, for in another half minute the ticket appears in a pocket that he has already gone through several times. The official cons his watch every five seconds. A clerk, apparently from one of the ticket windows, rushes up with a long strip ticket. There is some question about a sailor with a furlough ticket to Providence. Has he gone through? Haven't seen him. The gateman claps the gate to and switches off the light. Three other men come dashing up and are let through by the kindness of the usher. Then comes the sailor galloping along with a heavy suitcase. Here he is! Here's your ticket! Again the gate is opened and the navy man tears down the platform. The train is already moving, but he just makes it. Far out, in the bright sunlight beyond the station, the engine can be seen pulling out, ejecting a stiff spire of smoke and horizontal billows of steam.

At the same time rumbles in the hourly express from New York. Watch the people come out. Here is the brisk little man with a brown bag, who always leads the crowd. The men from the smoker are first, puffing pipes or cigars. They all seem to know exactly where they want to go and push on relentlessly. After the main body of travelers come the Pullman passengers, usually followed by porters. Here is a girl in a very neat blue suit. Her porter carries an enormous black hat box painted with very swagger stripes of green. She is pretty, in a

rather frank way, but too dusty with powder. An actress, one supposes. A tall young man steps out from the crowd, something very rakish about him, too. She looks surprised. "Nice of me to meet you, wasn't it?" he says. They walk off together, and one notices the really admirable hang of her blue skirt, just reaching her fawn spats. Sorry she uses so much powder. . . . All these little dramas were enacted to a merry undertone of constant sound: the clear chime of bells, the murmur and throb of hissing steam, the rumble of baggage trucks, the slither of thousands of feet. . . .

Inside the station the world is divided sharply into two halves. On the trainward side all is bustle and stir; the bright colors of news stands and flower stalls, brisk consultation of timetables at the information desk, little telephone booths where lights wink on and off. . . .

But abaft the big stairway a quiet solemnity reigns. The long benches of the waiting room seem a kind of Friends' meeting. Momently one expects to see some one rise and begin to speak. But it is not the peace of resignation; it is the peace of exhaustion. These are the wounded who have dragged themselves painfully from the onset, stricken on the great battle-field of Travel. Here one may note the passive patience of humanity, and also how pathetically it hoards its little possessions. A lady rises to get a drink of water. With what zealous care she stacks all her impediments in a neat pile—umbrella, satchel, handbag, shawl, suitcase, tippet, rain-coat and baby—and confides them to her companion. A gust of that characteristic railroad restaurant odor drifts outward from the dining-room—a warm, soupy blend of browned chicken-skin and crisp roll-crust. On one end of the bench are three tall bronzed doughboys, each with two service stripes and the red chevron. They have

bright blue eyes and are carefully comparing their strip tickets, which seem nearly a yard long. A lady in very tight black suede slippers stilts out of the dining room. Like every one else in the waiting room, she walks as though her feet hurt her. The savor of food is blown outward by electric fans. The doughboys are conferring together. They have noticed two lieutenants dining at one of the white-draped tables. This seems to enrage them. Finally they can stand it no longer. Their vast rawhide marching boots go clumping into the dining room. Every now and then the announcer comes to the head of the stairway and calls out something about a train to Harrisburg, Altoona, Pittsburgh and Chicago. There is a note of sadness in his long-drawn wail, as though it would break his heart if no one should take this train, which is a favorite of his. A few weary casuals hoist themselves from the benches, gather their belongings anew and stagger away.

Christopher Morley, *Travels in Philadelphia*.
By permission of the author and David McKay
Company.

CARNIVAL

They were led out of another broad and low gateway into a very large old English garden, full of torches and bonfires, by the broken light of which a vast carnival of people were dancing in motley dress. Syme seemed to see every shape of Nature imitated in some crazy costume. There was a man dressed as a wind-mill with enormous sails, a man dressed as an elephant, a man dressed as a balloon; the two last, together, seemed to keep the thread of their farcical adventures. Syme even saw, with a queer thrill, one dancer dressed like an enormous hornbill, with a beak twice as big as himself—the

queer bird which had fixed itself on his fancy like a living question while he was rushing down the long road at the Zoölogical Gardens. There were a thousand other such objects, however. There was a dancing lamp-post, a dancing apple tree, a dancing ship. One would have thought that the untamable tune of some mad musician had set all the common objects of field and street dancing an eternal jig. And long afterwards, when Syme was middle-aged and at rest, he could never see one of those particular objects—a lamp-post, or an apple tree, or a wind-mill—without thinking that it was a strayed reveller from that revel of masquerade.

On one side of this lawn, alive with dancers, was a sort of green bank, like the terrace in such old-fashioned gardens. Along this, in a kind of crescent, stood seven great chairs, the thrones of the seven days . . . One by one the wanderers ascended the bank and sat in their strange seats. As each of them sat down a roar of enthusiasm rose from the carnival, such as that with which crowds receive kings. Cups were clashed and torches shaken, and feathered hats flung in the air. The men for whom these seats were reserved were men crowned with some extraordinary laurels. But the central chair was empty.

. . . He saw on the sea of human faces in front of him a frightful and beautiful alteration, as if heaven had opened behind his head. But Sunday had only passed silently along the front like a shadow, and had sat in the central seat. He was draped plainly, in a pure and terrible white, and his hair was like a silver flame on his forehead.

For a long time—it seemed for hours—that huge masquerade of mankind swayed and stamped in front of them to marching and exultant music. Every couple dancing

seemed a separate romance; it might be a fairy dancing with a pillar-box, or a peasant girl dancing with the moon; but in each case it was, somehow, as absurd as Alice in Wonderland, yet as grave and kind as a love story. At last, however, the thick crowd began to thin itself. Couples strolled away into the garden-walks, or began to drift towards that end of the building where stood smoking, in huge pots like fish-kettles, some hot and scented mixtures of old ale or wine. Above all these, upon a sort of black framework on the roof of the house, roared in its iron basket a gigantic bonfire, which lit up the land for miles. It flung the homely effect of firelight over the face of vast forests of grey or brown, and it seemed to fill with warmth even the emptiness of upper night. Yet this also, after a time, was allowed to grow fainter; the dim groups gathered more and more round the great cauldrons, or passed, laughing and clattering, into the inner passages of that ancient house. Soon there were only some ten loiterers in the garden; soon only four. Finally the last stray merry-maker ran into the house whooping to his companions. The fire faded, and the slow, strong stars came out. And the seven strange men were left alone, like seven stone statues on their chairs of stone. Not one of them had spoken a word. . . .

The falling fire in the great cresset threw a last long gleam, like a bar of burning gold, across the dim grass. Against this fiery band was outlined in utter black the advancing legs of a black-clad figure. He seemed to have a fine close suit with knee-breeches, such as that which was worn by the servants of the house, only that it was not blue, but of this absolute sable. He had, like the servants, a kind of sword by his side. It was only when he had come quite close to the crescent of the seven and flung up his face to look at them, that Syme saw,

with thunderstruck clearness, that the face was the broad, almost ape-like face of his old friend Gregory, with its rank red hair and its insulting smile. . . .

“‘And there came a day,’” murmured Bull, who seemed really to have fallen asleep, “‘when the sons of God came before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.’”

Gilbert Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Copyright by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

CHAPTER IX

Psychological Description

The delineation of "states of mind" is, strictly speaking, the province of exposition rather than of description proper; it consists in analysis, often scientific in character, of abstract ideas. Yet it cannot be too frequently reiterated that the separation of the "forms of discourse" is artificial and conventional; in any discussion of psychological state, description, narration, and exposition are so fused that it is not possible, without violence, to separate them. For that reason, some discussion of the depiction of mental state, brief though it must be, may have a place here.

We know the mental state of others usually through physical expression. The dilation of the pupils of the eyes, the rigidity of the lips, the gathering tears, the quickness of breath, the flushing of the cheeks—all these are customary physical manifestations of mental condition. We recognize them in our neighbors and ourselves. Thus, when Stevenson in *Kidnapped*, describing the siege of the round-house, says that the heart of a boy "beat like a bird's both quick and little," and: "There was a dimness came before my eyes which I continually rubbed away, and which continually returned," we all recognize the physical symptoms of fear, even though the character has said that he does not know whether he was "what you call afraid." Hearn, in describing the symptoms of a recurrent nightmare which came from tropical

heat, stresses the *weight* of it—another idea which is of universal comprehension.

Fear is, of course, the mental state most frequently described, particularly by narrative writers. The devices and details of which they all make use seem to be surprisingly similar, until we reflect that human reactions to elemental sensations *are* similar. Hugo, in his famous study in *Les Misérables* of the child Cosette in the woods at night, strikes a universal chord in her unreasoning terror of the woods. "Darkness," says Hugo in explanation, "produces a dizziness. Man requires light, and anyone who enters the opposite of light feels his heart contracted. . . . In an eclipse, in night, in sooty opaqueness, there is anxiety even for the strongest men." So Cosette, the child, is overcome by the "black enormity of nature," by "something more terrible than terror." The effect upon her is at once repulsion and attraction. Filled with dread though she is, "she felt as if she could not prevent herself from returning to the same spot on the morrow." That, of course, is one of the horrors of nightmare: a dread, yet a terrible fascination, and a dim realization that it must all occur again.

Fear may deprive a human being of ability to reason, yet he may continue mechanically to do a thing to which he is accustomed. That is true, as well, of grief and other powerful emotions. The hands or the arms may instinctively close upon something they are holding, even in the face of the gravest danger; the apparent coolness of a really overwrought person who at great risk, saves some incongruously absurd article during a fire, is another illustration of this human capacity. Thus Cosette, in spite of her terror, instinctively felt her way along the woodland path, found the brook, mechanically felt for the young oak upon which she was accustomed to

lean, and filled her pail—all because she had done those things before; yet she was too frightened to notice anything which had not happened before, as that there fell into the water from her pocket a piece of money—her tiny fortune. The first things were mechanical and could be performed in spite of terror; the detection of the second would have required reason. Stevenson's David Balfour tried to pray, but "the hurry of mind, like a man running" would not let him think of the words. Joseph Conrad in *Typhoon* pictures Jukes in a great hurricane at sea; like Stevenson's character, he does not think himself afraid; he believes that he is stonily indifferent; all the time his numbness is in reality due to fear so great that it cannot be felt. Conrad mentions in this description the *bodily fatigue* which succeeds upon such states of overwhelming terror; and Hugo notices the fact that Cosette, though fear lent her unusual strength, was yet so weary that she was forced to lie, wretched and terror-stricken, on the ground in the very darkness she feared so horribly.

Almost every one has at some time learned that time is, during periods of suspense, relative; one may live an eternity in five minutes; or, on the other hand, one may find time passing with incredible swiftness. Rosalind in *As You Like It* tells Orlando "who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal." The moments one waits outside an operating room, the hours one waits for a telegraph message, the night through which one watches for the dawn—all these are interminable. The moments during which one listens, breathless, at night, waiting to hear again the mysterious noise that wakened him, may seem an hour; so there is no measuring the time during which a soldier moves one foot after another, too weary

to be conscious of anything but the fearful reiteration of movement (a sensation which Kipling catches in *Boots*); or the suspense of inaction—Stevenson comments on the fact that the time during which actual fighting went on was short to David, but the suspense made him want to scream; and Conrad's Jukes felt, while the violence of the typhoon was going on, as "though time itself were hurled upon one." A drowning man is said to see clearly all his life as in one lightning flash; many people who have seen death imminent in other forms have had a similar experience. Inconsequent details return; important things may be neglected; one may suddenly recall a person or scene, forgotten for years. Jukes remembered his father's face before he died, a game he had played when he was a child, and "the thick eyebrows of his first skipper."

Minds which are in a state of tension for any reason often notice, subconsciously, trivial things. Memories of crises through which one has passed will often be accompanied by recollection of utterly unimportant objects seen at the time. The mind may be either so numb or so distraught that it seizes with relief upon anything concrete and real: the design of a rug, an inkwell on a desk, a button on a coat. An invalid may find either comfort or madness in the repeated design in wall-paper; Thomas Beer's speaker in *Sandoval* "stared at the one hundred and thirty mermaids who smiled." When one is trying to "keep his mind off" a subject, he may feverishly count objects; or he may count them unconsciously, and come to himself with a start to find that his counting has reached the hundreds. Stevenson very subtly says of Markheim when, after committing a murder, he climbs the stairs: "The four-and-twenty steps were four-and-twenty agonies"; yet Markheim was not conscious that

he had counted those steps. Sherlock Holmes, on the other hand, frequently pointed out to Dr. Watson that the difference between the trained and the untrained mind is that the former always consciously counts and notes and remembers details, while the latter goes through the world with only blurred impressions.

Strong emotion of any sort may falsify impressions.¹ It is always amazing to compare the stories told by witnesses of an accident or a crime, and to find how little one may trust human observation. Psychological experiments have been tried upon groups of people in which a masked man "holds up" the whole group for a moment, and then disappears as suddenly as he came. The written reports of the group will show remarkable variations in observation; the man will be found to have been at once tall and short, fat and thin, masked and unmasked, smooth-shaven and heavily bearded, unarmed and armed to the teeth. An excellent—and extremely readable—discussion of this whole subject may be found in Hugo Münsterberg's *On the Witness Stand*.

Nature may seem, to the individual whose mind is disturbed, either to reflect or to conflict with his emotions. Shakespeare's characters constantly read their reactions into Nature; Hardy's seem inclined to read Nature's into themselves. A most interesting example of such interpretation of Nature occurs in Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (chapter 42), where the various changes which take place in Feverel's mind take place also in Nature. At the beginning, the atmosphere is oppressive. Feverel is in a state of tension. "The breathless silence was significant," says Meredith. As he goes on, unconscious of time or place, the storm breaks in the skies; the thunder and lightning are the tongue and the

¹ Compare Ruskin, "The Pathetic Fallacy."

eye of heaven; Feverel's spirit rises in proportion to the fury of the storm, affected by the grandeur of it, seeming to feel in its fury a release from himself. "A mighty water satisfied the desire of the earth," and Feverel, whose soul, like the earth, thirsts for something it does not understand, feels a "savage pleasure" in the drinking in of the rain by the parched earth. The thunder passes; but the rain becomes calmly steady; so does the mind of Richard Feverel. The rain seems to cleanse him of something—he is not sure what. All night he walks, and at dawn he finds himself weak and worn, but purified. The storm is over. "He was on the edge of a forest, entering a plain clothed with ripe corn under a spacious morning sky."

Fear and distraction and grief are far from being the only psychological processes that may be described. Arnold Bennett in *The Old Wives' Tale* speculates upon the vague ideas that may be passing in the mind of a baby to whom the world is only a place of sensation. The mental processes of the child afford one of the most interesting of all subjects. Many of our contemporary "psychological novelists" use for their first chapters the world of childhood—as we have already seen in our discussion of "reminiscent description." Psychological description of this sort goes only a step farther than reminiscent: instead of the world which the child sees, it interests itself in the reaction of the child to that world. Many of the sketches in Kenneth Grahame's *The Golden Age* offer such descriptions, particularly those sketches in which the child-mind deals with the problem of the stupidity of "grown-ups." Ludwig Lewisohn's *Upstream*, Henry Adams' *The Education of Henry Adams*, the first chapters of Stephen Vincent Benet's *Beginning of Wisdom*, the early portions of May Sinclair's *Arnold Water-*

low, *Mary Olivier*, and *Anne Severn and the Fieldings*, J. M. Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy*, Booth Tarkington's *Seventeen*, the first books of Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*, Marcel Proust's *A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleur*—these are but random examples of the treatment of this modern and very interesting subject. Among contemporary writers Thomas Beer is perhaps unique in his studies of a not infrequent state of mind: a curiously vague yet very real adolescent mingling of understanding, bewilderment, and rebellion. His *Sandoval* is a study of such a state of mind; best of all is his unusual short story "The Ethical Dative."

The materials for psychological description are even more easily available than the materials for other kinds of description. They are our own states of mind, our own feelings and sensations, or the sensations and feelings we may imagine in others. Between Arnold Bennett's study of the mind of a child and that stupendous and terrible study of Dostoievsky's, *Crime and Punishment*, there is a life and a world, yet the principle of both is the same. For such description, we must look—not perhaps into our hearts—but into our minds, and write.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

THE BLIZZARD

Even to the strongest man, there was terror in this storm, the breath of which came with a roar and struck with a shiver, as the trees creaked and groaned, and the paths and roads were obliterated. As the tumult grows hills are leveled, and hollows rise into hills. Every shed-roof is the edge of an oblique Niagara of snow; every

angle the center of a whirlpool. If you are caught out in it, the Spirit of the Storm flies at you and loads your eyebrows and eyelashes and hair and beard with icicles and snow. As you look out into the white, the light through your blood-shot eyelids turns everything to crimson. Your feet lag, as the feathery whiteness comes almost to your knees. Your breath comes choked as with water. If you are out far away from shelter, God help you! You struggle along for a time, all the while fearing to believe that the storm which did not seem so very dangerous, is growing more violent, and that the daylight, which you thought would last for hours yet, seems to be fading, and that night appears to be setting in earlier than usual. It is! For there are two miles of snow between you and the sun. But in a swiftly moving maze of snow, partly spit out of the lowering clouds, and partly torn and swept up from the gray and cloud-like earth, in a roar of rising wind, and oppressed by growing anxiety, you stubbornly press on.

Night shuts down darker. You can not tell, when you try to look about you, what is sky and what is earth; for all is storm. You feel more and more tired. All at once, you find that the wind which was at your side a while ago, as you kept beating into it on your course toward help and shelter, is now at your back. Has the wind changed? No; it will blow for hours from the same quarter—perhaps for days! No; you have changed your course, and are beating off with the storm! This will never do; you rally and again turn your cheek to the cutting blast; but you know that you are off your path; yet you wonder if you may not be going right—if the wind *has* changed; or if you have not turned to the left when you should have gone to the right.

Loneliness, anxiety, weariness, uncertainty. An awful

sense of helplessness takes possession of you. If it were daylight, you could pass around the deep drifts, even in this chaos; but now a drift looks the same as the prairie grass swept bare. You plunge headlong into it, flounder through it, creeping on hands and knees, with your face sometimes buried in the snow, get on your feet again, and struggle on.

You know that the snow, finer than flour, is beating through your clothing. You are chilled, and shiver. Sometimes you stop for a while, and with your hands over your eyes stand stopped with your back to the wind. You try to stamp your feet to warm them, but the snow, soft and yielding, forbids this. You are so tired that you stop to rest in the midst of a great drift—you turn your face from the driving storm and wait. It seems so much easier than stumbling wearily on. Then comes the in-rushing consciousness that to rest thus is to die. You rush on in a frenzy. You have long since ceased to think of what is your proper course,—you only know that you must struggle on. You attempt a shout;—ah, it seems so faint and distant even to yourself! No one else could hear it a rod in this raging, howling, shrieking storm, in which awful sounds come out of the air itself, and not alone from the things against which it beats. And there is no one else to hear.

You gaze about with snow-smitten eyeballs for some possible light from a friendly window. Why, the sun itself could not pierce this moving earth-cloud of snow! Your feet are not so cold as they were. You can not feel them as you walk. You come to a hollow filled with soft snow. Perhaps there is the bed of a stream deep down below. You plunge into this hollow, and as you fall, turn your face from the storm. A strange and delicious sense of warmth and drowsiness steals over you; you

sink lower, and feel the cold soft whiteness sifting over neck and cheek and forehead: but you do not care. The struggle is over; and—in the morning the sun glints coldly over a new landscape of gently undulating alabaster. Yonder is a little hillock which marks the place where the blizzard overtook its prey. Sometime, when the warm March winds have thawed the snow, some gaunt wolf will snuff about this spot, and send up the long howl that calls the pack to the banquet.

From *Vandemark's Folly*, by Herbert Quick.
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COSETTE IN THE WOODS

The child took a lamentable glance before and behind her. What should she do? What would become of her? Where should she go? It was from her mistress she recoiled; she turned back in the direction of the spring and began running. She left the village running, she entered the wood running, looking at nothing, hearing nothing. She did not stop till breath failed her, but she went on ahead, wildly. While running she felt inclined to cry, for the nocturnal rustling of the forest completely surrounded her. She did not think, she did not see; the immensity of night was opposed to this little creature; on one side was darkness, on the other an atom. It was only seven or eight minutes' walk from the skirt of the wood to the spring, and Cosette knew the road from having gone there several times by day. Strange to say, she did not lose her way, for a remnant of instinct vaguely guided her; still she did not look either to the right or to the left, for fear of seeing things in the branches and shrubs. In this way she reached the spring; it was a

narrow natural basin hollowed by the water in the dry soil, about two feet in depth, surrounded by moss and that gauffered grass which is called Henri IV's ruff, and paved with a few heavy stones. A rivulet escaped from it with a little gentle murmur.

Cosette did not take the time to breathe; it was very dark, but she was accustomed to come to this fountain. She felt in the obscurity for a young oak that leaned over the spring, and usually served her as a support, caught a branch, stooped down, and plunged the bucket into the water. She was in such a violent state that her strength was tripled. While thus bent, she did not notice that the pocket of her apron emptied itself into the stream, and that the fifteen-sous piece fell into the water. Cosette neither saw nor heard it fall; she drew up the bucket nearly full, and placed it on the grass. This done, she felt that she was exhausted with fatigue; she would have liked to start again at once, but the effect of filling the bucket had been so great that she found it impossible to move a step. She fell on to the grass, and lay there utterly exhausted. She shut her eyes, then opened them again, not knowing why, but unable to do otherwise. By her side the water stirring in the bucket made circles that resembled snakes of white fire. Over her head the sky was covered with large black clouds, which seemed like smoke; the tragic mask of the gloom seemed to bend vaguely over this child. Jupiter was setting in the profundity; the child gazed with a wondering eye at this large star, which she did not know, and which terrified her. The planet was at this moment very near the horizon, and was passing through a dense fog, which gave it a horrible redness. The fog, which was of a gloomy purple hue, enlarged the planet, and it looked like a luminous wound. A cold wind blew from the plain; the wood

was dark, but there was no rustling of leaves, and none of the vague and fresh gleams of summer. Large branches stood out frightfully, and shapeless, stunted bushes soughed in the glades. The tall grass twined under the breeze like eels, and the brambles writhed long arms provided with claws seeking to clutch their prey. A few withered patches of fern, impelled by the breeze, passed rapidly, and seemed to be flying before something that was coming up.

Darkness produces a dizziness. Man requires light, and anyone who enters the opposite of light, feels his heart contracted. When the eye sees darkness, the soul sees trouble: in an eclipse, in night, in sooty opaqueness, there is anxiety even for the strongest men. No one walks alone at night in a forest without a tremor, for shadows and trees are formidable densities. A chimerical reality appears in the indistinct profundity; the inconceivable is visible a few paces from you with spectral clearness. You see floating in space, or in your own brain, something vague and intangible, like the dreams of sleeping flowers. There are stern attitudes on the horizon, and you breathe the effluvia of the great black vacuum. You feel frightened and inclined to look behind you. The cavities of night, the silent outlines which disperse as you advance, the irritated tufts, the lurid pools, the lugubrious reflected in the mournful, the sepulchral immensity of silence, the possible strange beings, the bending of mysterious branches, the frightful torsos of trees, the long waves of quivering grass;—you are defenceless against this. There is no man, however bold, who does not shudder and feel this proximity of agony; something hideous is experienced, as if the soul were amalgamated with the shades. This penetration of darkness is indescribably sinister in a child. Forests

are apocalypses, and the beating of the wings of a little soul produces a sound of death beneath their monstrous dome.

Without understanding what she experienced, Cosette felt herself affected by this black enormity of nature; it was no longer terror that overpowered her, but something even more terrible than terror. She shuddered, and words fail to describe the strange nature of this shudder which chilled her to the heart. Her eye had become stern, and she felt as if she could not prevent herself from returning to the same spot on the morrow. Then, by a species of instinct, and in order to emerge from this singular state which she did not understand, but which terrified her, she began counting aloud, one, two, three, four, up to ten, and when she finished, she began again. This restored to her a true perception of the things that surrounded her: she felt the coldness of her hands which she had wetted in drawing the water. She rose, for fear had seized upon her again, a natural and insurmountable fear. She had only one thought left, to fly, fly at full speed through the woods, and across the fields as far as the houses, the windows, and the lighted candles. Her eye fell on the bucket before her; and such was the terror with which her mistress inspired her that she did not dare fly without the bucket. She seized the handle with both hands and found it difficult to lift. She proceeded thus for about a dozen yards, but the bucket was full and heavy, and she was compelled to set it on the ground. She breathed for a moment, and then lifted the bucket, and started again, this time going a little farther. But she was still obliged to stop once more, and, after a few moments' rest, set out again. She walked with body bent forward and drooping head, like an old woman; and the weight of the bucket stiffened her thin arms. The

iron handle swelled and froze her small white hands. From time to time she was forced to stop, and each time she did so the cold water from the bucket plashed her bare leg. This occurred in the heart of a wood, at night in winter, far from any human eye. She was a child of eight years of age, and God alone at this moment saw the sorrowful sight, and her mother, too, doubtless! for these are things which open the eyes of the dead in their graves.

Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables*. By permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

VESPERTINA COGNITIO

In tropical countries, owing to atmospheric conditions, the oppression of dreams is a more serious suffering than with us, and is perhaps most common during the siesta. All who can afford it pass their nights in the country; but for obvious reasons the majority of colonists must be content to take their siesta, and its consequences, in town.

The West-Indian siesta does not refresh like that dreamless midday nap which we enjoy in Northern summers. It is a stupefaction rather than a sleep,—beginning with a miserable feeling of weight at the base of the brain: it is a helpless surrender of the whole mental and physical being to the overpressure of light and heat. Often it is haunted by ugly visions, and often broken by violent leaps of the heart. Occasionally it is disturbed also by noises never noticed at other times. When the city lies all naked to the sun, stripped by noon of every shadow, and empty of wayfarers, the silence becomes amazing. In that silence, the papery rustle of a palm-leaf, or the sudden sound of a lazy wavelet on the beach,

—like the clack of a thirsty tongue,—comes immensely magnified to the ear. And this noon, with its monstrous silence, is for the black people the hour of ghosts. Everything alive is senseless with the intoxication of light;—even the woods drowse and droop in their wrapping of lianas, drunk with sun. . . .

Out of the siesta I used to be most often startled, not by sounds, but by something which I can describe only as a sudden shock of thought. This would follow upon a peculiar internal commotion caused, I believe, by some abnormal effect of heat upon the lungs. A slow suffocating sensation would struggle up into the twilight-region between half-consciousness and real sleep, and there bestir the ghastliest imaginings,—fancies and fears of living burial. These would be accompanied by a voice, or rather the idea of a voice, mocking and reproaching:—*“‘Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.’ . . . Outside it is day,—tropical day,—primeval day! And you sleep! . . . ‘Though a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet—’ . . . Sleep on!—all this splendor will be the same when your eyes are dust! . . . ‘Yet let him remember the days of darkness;—FOR THEY SHALL BE MANY!’”*

How often, with that phantom crescendo in my ears, have I leaped in terror from the hot couch, to peer through the slatted shutters at the enormous light without—silencing, mesmerizing;—then dashed cold water over my head, and staggered back to the scorching mattress, again to drowse, again to be awakened by the same voice, or by the trickling of my own perspiration—a feeling not always to be distinguished from that caused by the running of a centipede! And how I used to long for the night, with its Cross of the South! Not because the night ever

brought coolness to the city, but because it brought relief from the *weight* of that merciless sunfire. For the feeling of such light is the feeling of a deluge of something ponderable,—something that drowns and dazzles and burns and numbs all at the same time, and suggests the idea of liquefied electricity.

Lafcadio Hearn, *Exotics and Retrospectives*.
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& Company.

TYPHOON

Jukes remained indifferent in the overpowering force of the hurricane, which made the very thought of action utterly vain. Besides, being very young, he had found the occupation of keeping his heart completely steeled against the worst so full of excitement that he had come to feel an impatient dislike towards any other form of activity whatever. The immediate peril had an atrocious side—the violence, the darkness, the uproar—which made the business of enduring it all surprisingly engrossing. He wasn't in the least scared; he knew that very well; and the proof of it was that, firmly believing he would never see another sunrise, he could now be sitting down, in a manner of speaking, as calm as possible under that belief.

There are moments of do-nothing heroics to which even good men surrender at times. Many officers of ships can no doubt recall a case in their experience when just such a trance of confounded stoicism would come all at once over a whole ship's company. The mere recollection of such a passage is enough to bring back all the original dismay. It is difficult to allude to it without flinging swear-words backwards into the past; not precisely at

the men themselves, which would be like throwing stones, but upon the unhonored memory at large.

Jukes, however, had no wide experience of men or storms. He conceived himself to be calm—inexorably calm as the very statue of calmness in the night and terror of a storm. It suited him to be left alone thus, and it seemed also as though really nothing more could be required of him. But as a matter of fact, he was cowed; not abjectly, but only so far as a decent man may, without becoming loathsome to himself.

It was rather like a forced-on numbness of spirit. The long, long stress of a gale does it; the suspense of the interminably culminating catastrophe; the trial of sustained violence going on endlessly, as though time itself were hurled upon one; the formidable hint of annihilation in the sweep and roar of the wind. And there is a bodily fatigue in the mere holding on to existence within the excessive tumult; a searching and insidious fatigue that penetrates deep into a man's breast to cast down and sadden his heart, which is incorrigible, and of all the gifts of earth—even before life itself—aspires to peace.

Jukes was benumbed much more than he supposed. He stood very wet, very cold, stiff in every limb, and in a momentary hallucination of swift visions (it is said a drowning man thus reviews all his life) he was run up against by memories altogether unconnected with his present situation. He remembered his father, for instance; a worthy but fanciful business man, who, at an unfortunate crisis in his affairs, went quietly to bed and died forthwith in a state of resignation. Jukes did not recall these circumstances, of course; but remaining otherwise unconcerned, he remembered distinctly the poor man's face, a certain game of nap he played when quite a boy in Table Bay, on board a ship since lost with all

hands, the thick eyebrows of his first skipper; and, without any emotion, as he might years ago have walked listlessly into her room and seen her sitting there with a book, he remembered his mother,—dead, too, now,—the resolute woman left badly off, who had been very firm in his bringing up.

It could not have lasted more than a second, perhaps not so much. A heavy arm had fallen about his shoulders; Captain MacWhirr's voice was speaking his name into his ear. "Jukes! Jukes!"

From *Typhoon*, by Joseph Conrad. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Page & Co.

GRIZEL'S JOURNEY

The station where she alighted was in a hubbub of life; everyone seemed to leave the train here, and to resent the presence of all the others. They were mostly English. The men hung back, as if, now that there was business to be done in some foolish tongue, they had better leave the ladies to do it. Many of them seemed prepared, if there was dissension, to disown their womankind and run for it. They looked haughty and nervous. Such of them as had tried to shave in the train were boasting of it and holding handkerchiefs to their chins. The ladies were moving about in a masterful way, carrying bunches of keys. When they had done everything, the men went and stood by their sides again.

Outside the station 'buses and carriages were innumerable, and everybody was shouting, but Grizel saw that nearly all her fellow-passengers were hurrying on foot or conveyance to one spot, all desirous of being there first, and she thought it must be the place where the

diligence started from, and pressed on with them. It proved to be a hotel where they all wanted the best bedroom, and many of them had telegraphed for it, and they gathered round a man in uniform and demanded that room of him; but he treated them as if they were little dogs and he was not the platter, and soon they were begging for a room on the fourth floor at the back, and swelling with triumph if they got it. The scrimmage was still going on when Grizel slipped out of the hotel, having learned that the diligence would not start until the following morning. It was still early in the afternoon. How could she wait until tomorrow?

Bad-Platten was forty miles away. The road was pointed out to her; it began to climb at once. She was to discover that for more than thirty miles it never ceased to climb. She sat down, hesitating, on a little bridge that spanned a horrible rushing white stream. Poets have sung the glories of that stream, but it sent a shiver through her. On all sides she was caged in by a ring of splendid mountains, but she did not give them one admiring glance (there is one special spot where the guide-books advise you to stop for a moment to do it); her one passionate desire was to fling out her arms and knock them over.

She had often walked twenty miles in a day, in a hill country too, without feeling tired, and there seemed no reason why she should not set off now. There were many inns on the way, she was told, where she could pass the night. There she could get the diligence next day. This would not bring her any sooner to him than if she waited here until tomorrow; but how could she sit still till tomorrow? She must be moving; she seemed to have been sitting still for an eternity. "I must not do anything rash," she told herself, carefully. "I must ar-

rive at Bad-Platten able to sit down beside him the moment I have taken off my jacket—oh, without waiting to take off my jacket.” She went into the hotel and ate some food, just to show herself how careful she had become. About three o’clock she set off. She had a fierce desire to get away from that heartless white stream and the crack of whips and the doleful pine-woods, and at first she walked very quickly; but she never got away from them, for they marched with her. It was not that day, but the next, that Grizel thought anything was marching with her. That day her head was quite clear, and she kept her promise to herself, and as soon as she felt tired she stopped for the night at a village inn. But when she awoke very early next morning she seems to have forgotten that she was to travel the rest of the way by diligence; for, after a slight meal, she started off again on foot and she was walking all day.

She passed through many villages so like each other that in time she thought they might be the same. There was always a monster inn whence one carriage was departing as another drove up, and there was a great stone water-tank in which women drew their washing back and forward, and there was always a big yellow dog that barked fiercely and then giggled, and at the doors of painted houses children stood. You knew they were children by their size only. The one person she spoke to that day was a child who offered her a bunch of wild-flowers. No one was looking, and Grizel kissed her and then hurried on.

The carriage passed and repassed her. There must have been a hundred of them, but in time they became one. No sooner had it disappeared in dust in front of her than she heard the crack of its whip behind.

It was a glorious day of sweltering sun; but she was

bewildered now, and did not open the umbrella with which she had shielded her head yesterday. In the foreground was always the same white road, on both sides the same pine wood, laughing with wild flowers, the same roaring white stream. From somewhere near came the tinkle of cow-bells. Far away on heights, if she looked up, were villages made of match-boxes. She saw what were surely the same villages if she looked down; or the one was the reflection of the other, in the sky above or in the valley below. They stood out so vividly that they might have been within arm's reach. They were so small that she felt she could extinguish them with her umbrella. Near them was the detestably picturesque castle perched upon a bracket. Everywhere was that loathly waterfall. Here and there were squares of cultivated land that looked like door-mats flung out upon the hill-sides. The huge mountains raised their jagged heads through the snow, and were so sharp-edged that they might have been clipped out of cardboard. The sky was blue, without a flaw; but lost clouds crawled like snakes between heaven and earth. All day the sun scorched her, but the night was nipping cold.

From early morn till evening she climbed to get away from them, but they all marched with her. They waited while she slept. She woke up in an inn, and could have cried with delight because she saw nothing but bare walls. But as soon as she reached the door, there they all were, ready for her. An hour after she set off, she again reached that door; and she stopped at it to ask if this was the inn where she had passed the night. Everything had turned with her. Two squalls of sudden rain drenched her that day, and she forced her way through the first, but sought a covering from the second.

It was then afternoon, and she was passing through a

village by a lake. Since Grizel's time monster hotels have trampled the village to death, and the shuddering lake reflects all day the most hideous of caravansaries flung together as with a giant shovel in one of the loveliest spots on earth. Even then some of the hotels had found it out. Grizel drew near to two of them, and saw wet halls full of open umbrellas which covered the floor and looked like great beetles. These buildings were too formidable and she dragged herself past them. She came to a garden of hops and evergreens. Wet chairs were standing in the deserted walks, and here and there was a little arbor. She went into one of these arbors and sat down, and soon slid to the floor.

James Matthew Barrie, *Tommy and Grizel*.
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THE WAY OF THE SEA

She walked quickly—the village was far behind, and in her ears a restless moan. She must be quite near the sea, and the next moment leaving the lane with its hedges of thorn, she saw it.

In the distance, it looked strangely mild, just a blue streak lying against the emerald of the marshes. Strange lights gleamed over it, and on the horizon were mist-wrapped islands. She ran towards it through the grass, her heart warm with the two blessed memories of her life, her childhood and Raphael's love. That was how she would die—running, running, all the storm and choke and sob of life forgotten, nothing remembered but two sweet despised things.

The roar grew louder in her ears, and she saw the beach with its shining rim of sea-licked sand. The water

was crinkled with the wind and still rolling with last night's storm. On her left the marsh stretched green and unbroken to the bungalows of Selsey—the wind sang across it like a flute, and raced with her to the beach—the shingle broke and scattered from under her running feet, pebbles rolled down with her to the sand and splashed with her into the sea—the waves dashed over her feet and round her ankles—and from her lips broke a shout of joy.

Somehow it was quite different from what she had expected. Something more than miles and years separated those rolling breakers from the little white horses of Morecambe Bay. She watched them as they tumbled about her, sucking and tearing at the sand, hurling strange sea-things out of their foam, then snatching them back again. Their song rang like the shouting of stars, to the drum of great winds that flutter and throb. It was ecstasy to curl her wet feet in their brine—her face stung with their spray, her brain drunk with their glory. At her side was a break-water, smashed by the storm, huge beams lying tossed like matches on the beach—there were rocks worn hollow by the ceaseless swell. A great cloud of spume burst over her, whipped her cheeks, stung her eyes, sent her staggering and splashing in the water that foamed up to her knees. Once again she shouted for joy,

“Thank God, I have lived! I have lived!”

The cry was caught up by the wind, and buffeted away to Hayling Island in the west. It was the cry of a great realization. She had lived. Revulsion, disillusion, bathos and frustration had all had part in that life, but it had been life, life itself, no counterfeiting apology. In every day of the years just past had been the stamp and roar of battle, the racket of experience. She thought of

the dull vegetable existence of other girls she had known, swaddled in conventions, shibboleths, dogmas, starched ideas of right and wrong. She had escaped all that. She had known to the full that clattering galloping thing called life. There might be moments of it which she regretted—but it was life—she had lived—she had not merely existed, like a turnip or a cabbage or the well-brought-up young lady.

Oh, praise the Lord for this tumbling whirling surge of life!—part somehow of the water round her knees. She was now running through the surf, her arms outstretched, her head thrown back, her whole body romping with the sea. The waves roared into her ears, the splash of her legs was rhythm, the sob of the wind was music—the very sunshine seemed full of sound. For one brief moment the world was nothing but sea—the sight, the sound, the smell, the touch, the taste of sea. Then suddenly she flung herself down in her would-be grave, and laughed loud and long and madly, the waves breaking over her shoulders and filling her mouth with brine.

She had lived—and she would still live. Thank God she saw it all clearly now. The great cosmic glory of water and light to which she had brought the petty sorrows of her heart, had shown her what a fool she had been to sit down with her shards and shreds. She would arise and pick up boldly what she had let drop out of folly and weakness. All was not over because she and Andy had had an idiotic misunderstanding—life swept such things away as the sea swept the pebbles from the shore.

She had come to seek death and had found life. Who can stand against life, the green sea that tumbles round one's limbs and tears up like match wood the breakwaters

one has built?—There, kneeling drenched in the surf and spray, Sally surrendered to life.

By permission, from Sheila Kaye-Smith, *Isle of Thorns*. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

AUTOMATIC WRITING

"You just have to be quiet." Fenwick gave his last explanations. "And let your right arm be comfortably slack, and don't look at the paper if you do begin to write. And if nothing happens in twenty minutes"—he looked interrogatively at Maud Allis—"then we play bridge, do we?"

Mrs. Allis nodded. "And I'm going to put out some of the lights, whether it's necessary or not. We'd be rather ridiculous in a glare, and we'd probably be all looking at each other to see if anyone's else arm was moving." So she reduced the room to a demi-obscurity, very soothing and non-committal.

Fenwick sat at the other end of Mrs. Conway's sofa, resting his pad on his knee. "Won't your knitting spoil it?" he murmured.

"Dear no," she whispered back. "I'll stop, if you like. But knitting-needles won't keep them away."

"No fooling, Ben." Mrs. Allis's admonishing words were the last spoken. After that, silence.

I did my best to play the game, but my hand did not move. I became, somehow, perfectly sure that it never would move, and that conviction edged my voluntary slackness of spirit. The corners of the room were too dark for me to see how each fellow guest was faring; but I noted idly the little stir of Mrs. Conway's needles,

the faint fire-glow on Mrs. Medford's bent blond head, Ben Allis's comfortably hunched position, Miss Ford's graceful, pensive attitude. After fifteen minutes, I constituted myself timekeeper, moving my left hand so that the radium dial of my wrist-watch showed. I stared at it until I began to feel prickly all over. If my arm didn't move then, I thought, I was surely no good at the business; for I was half hypnotized by my concentrated stare at the dial, and my left hand certainly had no physical knowledge of what my right hand, off in space, was doing.

When twenty minutes were up, I decided to give them a little more time, for good measure. The minute-hand crawled as it does when you are taking a pulse or a temperature. Before the half hour was quite reached, Ben Allis leaped to his feet.

"I'm tired of this. There's nothing in it. Switch on the lights, you people."

But the others were stretching cramped limbs, rising slowly from their fixed positions, tottering in the half-gloom. I had not risen, myself, and I watched them. They looked drugged, unsure, wan, and ungraceful in the dim light—purgatorial poor souls. Only for a second; but just for a second the only normal thing in the scene was the implacable motion of Mrs. Conway's fingers. Then Carter turned on the light at my elbow, and I saw my own pad of paper. The page, ten inches by eight, was covered with the huge scrawl of two words: "Ask Fenwick." And I had not known, staring at the dial of my watch, that my arm had moved.

Katherine Fullerton Gerould, "Belshazzar's Letter" in *Valiant Dust*. Copyright 1922 by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

THE MIND OF A CHILD

While they had tea, Samuel sitting opposite to his wife, and Miss Insull nearly against the wall (owing to the moving of the table), the baby rolled about on the hearth-rug, which had been covered with a large soft woollen shawl, originally the property of his great-grandmother. He had no cares, no responsibilities. That shawl was so vast that he could not clearly distinguish objects beyond its confines. On it lay an india-rubber ball, an indiarubber doll, a rattle, and Fan. He vaguely recollected all four items, with their respective properties. The fire also was an old friend. He had occasionally tried to touch it, but a high fence always came in between. For ten months he had never spent a day without making experiments on this shifting universe in which he alone remained firm and stationary. The experiments were chiefly conducted out of idle amusement, but he was serious on the subject of food. Lately the behavior of the universe in regard to his food had somewhat perplexed him, had indeed annoyed him. However, he was of a forgetful, happy disposition, and so long as the universe continued to fulfil its sole end as a machinery for the satisfaction, somehow, of his imperious desires, he was not inclined to remonstrate. He gazed at the flames and laughed, and laughed because he had laughed. He pushed the ball away and wriggled after it, and captured it with the assurance of practice. He tried to swallow the doll, and it was not until he had tried several times to swallow it that he remembered the failure of previous efforts and philosophically desisted. He rolled with a fearful shock, arms and legs in air, against the mountainous flank of that mammoth Fan, and clutched at Fan's ear. The whole mass of Fan upheaved and

vanished from his view, and was instantly forgotten by him. He seized the doll and tried to swallow it, and repeated the exhibition of his skill with the ball. Then he saw the fire again and laughed. And so he existed for centuries: no responsibilities, no appetites; and the shawl was vast. Terrific operations went on over his head. Giants moved to and fro. Great vessels were carried off and great books were brought and deep voices rumbled regularly in the spaces beyond the shawl. But he remained oblivious. At last he became aware that a face was looking down at his. He recognized it, and immediately an uncomfortable sensation in his stomach disturbed him; he tolerated it for fifty years or so, and then he gave a little cry. Life had resumed its seriousness.

"Black alpaca. B quality. Width 20, t.a. 22 yards," Miss Insull read out of a great book. She and Mr. Povey were checking stock.

And Mr. Povey responded: "Black alpaca, B quality. Width 20, t.a. 22 yards. It wants ten minutes yet." He had glanced at the clock.

"Does it?" said Constance, well knowing that it wanted ten minutes.

The baby did not guess that a high invisible god named Samuel Povey, whom nothing escaped, and who could do everything at once, was controlling his universe from an inconceivable distance. On the contrary, the baby was crying to himself, "There is no God."

From *The Old Wives' Tale*, by Arnold Bennett.
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THE CHRISTENING PARTY

The christening party came along under the tender green trees of Prince's Avenue. There were three vic-

torias, royalistic in appearance; blue-black coachmen held the reins in white gloved hands while thoroughbred hackneys stepped high as if to meet the requirements of a state occasion; silver harness jingled after the best traditions of the days when Benjamin Harrison—God rest his solid Republican bones!—was offending the South with a tariff unpleasantly protective. The dignified splendor of that turnout attracted an attention to which it was obviously indifferent. The public peered. Uninvited spectators squinted through lace curtains in the lesser mansions along Prince's Avenue. Negro pedestrians, not so crafty as their white brothers in the art of concealing emotion, stopped in their tracks and stared, stunned by a celestial visitation.

For the Peakes were driving from their fine old house in Inness Street to All Souls' Church where, both as Christians and as ancestor worshippers, they owed an important visit. But more important still, from the angle of life at which we view this story, was the reaction on a certain small boy who had set a heavy market basket in front of his bare toes, and was giving himself up utterly to a dream of human greatness. Admah Holtz had lived eight years in a seamy world. He was at the age when the mind is like putty; a curious putty that will harden suddenly in spots, creating impressions in solid rock. But the little creature who was the helpless target of so much attention had no mind at all as yet. She was merely a combination of jerky legs, untrained digestive tract, aimlessly rebellious lungs.

Gosh, what a fuss over a baby! . . . So thought the boy with the candy basket. . . . Gosh, ain't that high toned! Look at the nigger mammy, totin' that baby across both hands like it was a million dollars worth of pound cake. Gosh. Look at all that lace on the baby.

I bet Ma never seen so much lace. And that nigger woman's dress. Whiter than starch. . . .

Here his thoughts scattered blindly like frightened mice; or like mice suddenly dazzled by a great light they stood at palsied attention, unable to move. A beautiful lady was descending from her carriage, one foot stepping out daintily as she laid a frail hand on an attendant elbow. She was of another world than Admah's. Daughter of a nation where, officially, there are no classes, she stood so many ranks above him that he must needs look up as the worshipper views Mt. Everest, lost in its own tremendous clouds. A Peake indeed!

Now the christening party was moving, a picture of animation, toward the church door. The lady, still leaning on the arm of her frock-coated escort, showed her teeth pleasantly. Her eyes were like pansies—if you can imagine pansies with disturbing fires at their centres. The gentlemen wore silk hats and Prince Alberts. The older ladies dripped with jet; their bodices were drawn tight over heavy busts. A gentleman of fifty-five, leaning on a gold headed cane, flirted humorously with a young lady whose black eyes snapped with animation under her lace parasol. And the newborn princess, cause of it all, was beginning to cry. . . .

"What folks is those?" asked Admah Holtz, directing his questions at a lanky negro boy of eleven. The boy, who had been dividing his attention between the christening party and the little bags of peppermint candy in Admah's basket, opened his mouth to a gummy grin,

"Whuh you come from?"

"Croست the River," replied Admah, quite without resentment at the colored boy's tone.

"I reckon ye come a long ways. How come you don' know Peakes when you see 'em?"

"Jedge Peakes," interposed a stout negress, evidently possessor of the lanky boy. It was said in the voice of the old time Viennese mentioning Hapsburgs.

"Gosh!" Admah's round eyes were focussed on the church door into which the gay procession was now passing. "All that fuss over a baby."

"Dat's a Peake baby," the negress informed him in a chiding tone. "Flora Lee Peake is de name she'll be christened by holy sanctum of de church. De fat gelman jes' passin' in wif' de cane is Jedge Peake. Mrs. Jedge Peake is gone in ahaid——"

"It must cost right smart o' money, hirin' a church and all." A speculative light, which even at that early date would brighten Admah's sallow face, began to kindle and to burn.

"Peakes," said the colored woman, "eat off o' golden plates—solid golden plates—and takes no stock o' money. Wha' fo' you want to hire a church?"

"I dunno." With a bare toe Admah poked the basket out of reach of the lanky colored boy.

"Thinkin' o' gittin' married?" A kindly sarcasm curved the woman's saddle colored cheeks.

"Naw. Only when I'm growed up I reckon I'll have my baby christened in style like that."

Such a silence fell upon the prediction that Admah picked up his basket and started shuffling away.

"Silo," he could hear the negress warning her son, "don't you go take none o' them candies offen that white boy. Maybe they got poison on 'em."

From *The Golden Bed*, by Wallace Irwin.
Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers,
New York and London.

SANDOVAL

I was hot and an irritation webbed my thoughts as I trudged the stairs, slapping the walnut hand-rail. When the rail gave out I slapped the walnut crust of the upper hall and almost crashed a palm on Christian in the glazed print hung near my bedroom's door. . . . Here was Christian, his hair neatly curled, leaping over spiked, absurd flames from the *Oneida's* deck. "Heroism of a New York Boy at New Orleans." All boys in pictures of the war had curly hair and limp graceful bodies ending in clean boots. . . . I wondered if Christian would ever talk about that leap and what he had felt like and what clothes he had worn, working the raft's corner loose from the singed ship. He must have feelings. I walked on and kicked open the door of my luxury.

Sun dragged from the carpet a sharp taste of fabric and my upholstery twinkled everywhere, red and blue. Golden pine-cones of my bedstead were torches in the light and the family's frame of beaded plush terribly sparkled beside the bathroom's arched entrance. A valet wiping the oilcloth alongside the tub murmured something in Swiss French about the heat. The tall chamber baked and the linoleum of raw colors glistened, drying. Christian must have bathed in our common tub before quitting this commodious elegance and its smell of lilac soap. He had spent all morning on the lower lawn, battering croquet balls before he had driven off to lunch with May in Tarrytown. I had watched, sedulously aloof, this roaming of the gay wooden balls and hoped that one would hit me by the fountain to make a topic. . . . Damn! If he knew that I had rolled all night in the shallow margins of sleep, why didn't he know that I wanted to talk to him? If I couldn't talk about

the stockmarkets or billiards, we could discuss May Almy.

I shed clothes and the valet picked them up from the carpet that tickled my soles while water charged into the painted zinc of the deep tub sheathed in walnut slabs. My feet left scars on the velvet, and sight of them slung my mind back to a room at Dr. Randall's school. . . . Who had my room this fall, and slammed the white, thick door against pursuits, and heard boots jar on the low panels while lads yelled? And did his feet make fleet stains on grey planks after a battle of sponges in the stone lavatory? He watched the moon erase cracks in that high, pale ceiling nightly, making it blue and clean. He had my bed. . . . A queer long sound came from my throat.

"Monsieur se fâche?"

"No—*non*. I'm just hot."

I walked past the little tame man's stare and dropped into the cavernous tub, slipped, and was flat for a breath, in a coffin of golden water pierced by sunshine. But a coffin would be colder than this flood poured by the thundering faucets. Warm water huddled about my brown knees and I sat staring at a hundred and thirty mermaids who smiled, waving conchs in the slick wall-paper. Mother thought it an improper pattern for a male bathroom. Stupid! Oh, but she was stupid! Father called Uncle Patterson Cray an ass, and he was mother's twin. I stopped the faucets with my toes and heard May's wheels leaving our elegance and mother's scarlet gown. Stupid! It hurt me so that I said wildly; "Damn, damn, damn!" to the dull bulging mermaids, and Christian's door opened on the third syllable. Light swam past his amber hair as he looked at me.

"Th-thought you'd gone to the city, Christian."

"Went to sleep. Ate too much lunch up at May's. Goin' in on the five o'clock."

He passed a brush about his head, slowly speaking, and I stared at a single flickering stud in the white shirt that sharply fell from the width of his chest to a narrow waist, like my waist. We had bodies much alike, but he was made of some flexible rock that flushed in a dim colour below the chilled blue eyes that now studied my shoulders. Then my feet, enlarged by water, drew his gaze, and then he asked: "What's the matter, Blacky?"

"Nothin'. . . . It's hot."

"Awful hot," said Christian, tossing back the brush into his bedroom. He took a plump, carmine book from under an arm and tapped a mermaid with its edge brutally. Yes, he knew I was lying, although his square face did not change with knowledge nor did his voice change, saying: "Tell me what's the matter, sonny."

"Oh, if mother's got to sing, why can't she——"

The sentence came to death under his look. Christian slid long hands into the red book and twisted paper. He said: "She does sing awful trash, but she ain't got any brains, son, y'know. She's stoopid."

"Oh, you think so, too?"

Christian grinned, said, "Lord bless the boy!" to a mermaid, and was no more a statue. Whenever he grinned, I remembered him, bare-legged, fighting another child in the gutter of Bank Street for my admiration. Christian had chewed his foe's ear. Now he grinned immensely and effaced with his white shoulders seven of the blue mermaids.

"She's stoopid as a brick, Blacky."

Thomas Beer, *Sandoval*. By permission of Mr. Thomas Beer and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

THE END

Southern Methodist University

Mustangs

This pen belongs
to Ed Mueller
It was
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